

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Minoru Hayashida, 89, retired fish market owner,  
Lower Paia

*"At that time, everything was bought on credit. I had the Japanese business in the beginning, but thinking I should also get the Filipino business, I treated them well...On their payday, I went to make collections. Once you become close... when they passed by I could call them by name. As I recognized their faces, they all came to pay. If I didn't recognize their faces, they didn't pay. They pretended to not know what I was talking about."*

Minoru Hayashida, Japanese, was born November 21, 1890, in Kamoto County, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. The oldest son of a poor farm family, he left Japan for Hawaii at the age of sixteen to supplement the family income and to avoid the military draft.

Hayashida's first job upon arriving on Maui in 1906 was cutting cane for HC&S at Puunene. In 1910, he began working for Nakayama Store in Lower Paia where he tended the stable, cut grass for the horses, and delivered goods to plantation residents in Haiku, Paia and Hamakua Poko. In 1912, when the store went out of business because they gave "too much credit", Hayashida started working for the Kaupakalua Liquor Company, which sold liquor to laborers working on the Maliko Gulch viaduct.

Between 1917 and 1925, Hayashida was an independent pineapple grower in Haiku. When the price of pineapples plunged, he gave it up and became a foreman for the Haiku (pineapple) branch of MA Company.

In 1932, Hayashida opened a fish market in Lower Paia. To do so, he joined a fish dealers' cooperative. In addition to selling fish in his store, he peddled fish in the plantation camps.

Hayashida closed his fish market in 1947 and started a poultry farm in Paia. Today, he lives in Lower Paia with his wife, Masuye. He enjoys handicrafts, gardening, bonsai, and poetry. Hayashida is a member of the Paia Senior Citizens', and is a past president of the Gold Star Parents' Club. In 1976, Hayashida was named male senior citizen of the year by the Maui County Commission on Aging.

Tape No. 7-10-1-79 TR and 7-11-1-79 TR

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Hayashida (MH)

November 8, 1979

Lower Paia, Maui

BY: Yukihiisa Suzuki (YS) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

[NOTE: Interview conducted in Japanese. Translation done by Miyuki Rickard.]

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Hayashida. Today is November 8, 1979, and we're at his home in Lower Paia, Maui.

YS: Can you please tell your story from the beginning?

MH: Yes.

YS: When were you born?

MH: Well, in Japanese, I was born November 21, year 23 [23rd year of Meiji].

YS: Where?

MH: In Kumamoto, Japan.

YS: Then it's almost your birthday.

(Laughter)

MH: It was 1890.

YS: Where in Kumamoto? Which district, which village?

MH: In Kumamoto Prefecture, a place called Kamoto.

YS: Kamoto? How do you write that [in Japanese characters]?

MH: It's written like "shita" [下].

YS: How about the "moto"?

MH: Moto is written "hon" [本].

YS: Oh, like this? (YS writes character and shows MH.)

MH: Yes, yes.

YS: Kamato-gun?

MH: That's right, Kamato-gun. In the village of Santo-mura. [Written like] Eastern Mountain. A place called Kogayo.

YS: Kogayo?

MH: Yes. Koga, "Old Lonely Place." (Laughs) It's written with the character "mon."

YS: So you were born Meiji 23, in Kumamoto Prefecture, in Kamoto County.

MH: Yes.

YS: Your parents also . . .

MH: My parents were in good health and lived there until I came here [to Hawaii].

YS: In the same Kamoto-gun?

MH: Yes, that's right. I'm the eldest son.

YS: Oh, the eldest son? I'm surprised your parents let their eldest son go.

MH: One reason was because we were so poor. Not only that. As you know, the Sino-Japanese War was on. Japan was in war every ten years with China. If I waited too much longer, I would have had to go into the war.

YS: So you came in Meiji---after the war?

MH: It was over, but peace hadn't been totally restored yet. [MH is referring to the Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1895, and the Russo-Japanese War, which began in 1904.]

YS: Before peace came?

MH: Yes. Right after the war ended on October 15, year 39 [1906], I came here. Last month it was seventy-three years ago.

YS: October 15?

MH: Yes. I wasn't quite sixteen years old then--fifteen years and eleven months. I was born in November. When I came---you know, San Francisco had the earthquake; the city was all in shambles. Boats used to [travel] from Hong Kong to Japan to Honolulu, then to

San Francisco. There were boats called Manchuria or Korea that used to make the trips around and around. At that time, I don't remember if it was Manchuria or Korea, but it got stuck in San Francisco. One got stuck in Midway.

YS: What do you mean, "it got stuck"?

MH: I don't know if it went into shallow waters or went aground . . .

YS: Because of the earthquake?

MH: I don't think Midway was because of that, but in San Francisco, it was because of the earthquake. Because of that, when I came we had to charter a boat. It was American---no, an English charter boat called Kaputeki-go.

YS: Kaputeki?

MH: We called it Kaputeki. It was an old boat.

YS: Is that a name?

MH: Yes, Kaputeki. That's how I came to Honolulu on the charter. There were no other ships available.

YS: Can you tell me more about your parents? What did your parents do in Kumamoto?

MH: Naturally, they did farming. Farming in Japan in those days was not very profitable--they couldn't even grow much rice. They worked hard for so little profit. (Laughs) It was a very meager existence.

YS: As farmers, what did they grow?

MH: In the valley, it was rice and wheat, and in the fields, millet, wheat, and potatoes--sweet potatoes. They grew these things.

YS: In the south, in Kyushu?

MH: Yes. Lots of potatoes are grown there. It was good for those who had a lot of land, but those who didn't worked leased land and had to pay. Even for fields where rice wouldn't grow, they had to pay with rice. When I think about it now, that was a cruel thing, but nothing could be done. Wheat was grown for free. The landlord would make them pay with rice even though rice couldn't be grown in some fields. My mother's youngest aunt had a lot of land--the most land in our family.

YS: What do you mean by "a lot"? How big?

MH: Several chō. One chō is ten tan. One acre is about four tan.



About that. [One chō equals approximately 2.5 acres; one tan equals approximately one-fourth acre.]

YS: How large was your parents' farmland?

MH: I don't know for sure, but it wasn't enough, so we had to use the aunt's land. We were tenant farmers and paid whatever grew. Even if it didn't grow one year, we had to pay the next year.

YS: Even the aunt?

MH: Yes. She was strict.

(Laughter)

MH: When I think about it now, she was unreasonable. There, we had no other outside work, all . . . . Now, no one is poor. They all go to work outside [of farming]. Those who have land, the women work the farm to grow enough for their own use. There are lots of work for the men on the outside. The women can create their own work and only work when they want to. So farming is much more leisurely now. All the women drive to the farm in Datsun now.

YS: So, as you mentioned before, you came to Hawaii October 15, 1906. Your reasons for coming were the draft and your family situation. How was it that you came to Hawaii?

MH: In our village, about ten years before I came, there were four or five people who went to America. One of them, our neighbor, came home [i.e., back to Japan from Hawaii].

YS: Who was he?

MH: His name was Furuta Taro. I don't know how much money he came back with, but he came home. After that, several men about my father's age went to Hawaii. They were in Wailuku--four or five of them. Soon our neighbor went to Hawaii, and also my friends. All the young men wanted to go in order to avoid the draft. The plan was to go to Hawaii, then on to the Mainland. Everyone said America was good. But they couldn't go directly to the Mainland. They had to make a stop first in Hawaii.

About a year before, three or four of my friends came together, but (tape garbled), only one came. His name was Furuta Kiyoshi. So I came looking for him. When I came--Furuta Sohei, Miyamoto Kenji, Tabaki Giichiro, and me--the four of us from our village planned to come together. I was the youngest. The others were two or three years older than me.

Then in Nagasaki, two of them failed the eye test, so only Miyamoto Kenji and I came to Hawaii.

YS: Is Mr. Miyamoto still well?

MH: He's passed away. I didn't know it then, but a relative of Miyamoto Kenji from the next village was also on the ship with us. We met at that time. Then we arrived in Honolulu and stayed for two or three days. There, Miyamoto Kenji failed the physical exam. (Laughs) They wouldn't let him pass.

YS: I suppose in those days physical examination for coming to Hawaii was very rigid.

MH: Yes. But I passed. I came from Honolulu to Maui with Miyamoto Kenji's relative, whose name was Niimi Yoshio. He was about three years older than me.

YS: What happened to Mr. Miyamoto?

MH: He finally came about one week later to Maui. He went to Haiku, where his aunt lived. Niimi Yoshio had someone from his village in Puunene Camp 6.

YS: Camp 6?

MH: Yes. Camp 6 was where the old airport was. There was a song about it long ago. "Let's take the Kinau to Spreckelsville on Maui . . . . " There was a boat named Kinau--an old junk.

YS: What's that song?

MH: (Laughs) It was a Hawaiian song--"Let's take the Kinau to Spreckelsville on Maui." Spreckels was the largest sugar grower at that time.

YS: So you came from Nagasaki?

MH: I boarded the ship in Nagasaki. It took ten days to reach Honolulu. When we left Nagasaki, we next reached Kobe. I didn't know when I'd be back again [to Japan], so I went ashore in Kobe with Miyamoto. There, I saw an automobile for the very first time--really. The driver was a Caucasian person, and we were so impressed. We saw only one.

YS: Then from Kobe . . .

MH: Then from Kobe, we reached Yokohama. There in Yokohama, we went ashore again.

YS: Then, directly from Yokohama took ten days?

MH: Yes. Ten days from Yokohama [to Honolulu].

YS: Then, altogether, it took longer.

MH: That's right.

YS: What was the name of the ship from Yokohama?

MH: Kaputeki-go.

YS: What?

MH: Kaputeki-go. Japanese used to call it Kobochiko. A ship called Kaputeki-go.

YS: Where was the ship from?

MH: It was a British ship. I don't know for sure, but that's what I had heard. It was a large, old, chartered ship.

YS: As I said before, when you left Kumamoto, I'm surprised your parents let their eldest son go . . .

MH: Yes. I now feel the same way.

YS: As the eldest son, did they expect you to come back to Japan?

MH: That's right. But the Sino-Japanese War continued for more than ten years [i.e., hostilities between Japan, China, and Russia continued for more than ten years], so every year it was an excuse for me not to go to war since I was in Hawaii. I had to send an official excuse every year. The consulate had to verify that I was in Hawaii.

YS: The Japanese government was particularly strict, then, about potential draftees going to Hawaii?

MH: No. I was okay until age twenty. At twenty they would be drafted. That's why I had to hurry up and come here--before age eighteen.

YS: When you left Kumamoto, your plan was to continue to the American Mainland, but it must have been difficult at that time.

MH: That's right. In Japan there was a company that took care of all arrangements for people to come to Hawaii or America. They took care of all my arrangements.

YS: Something like a travel agency today.

MH: Yes, like that.

YS: Did they encourage young people to go to Hawaii?

MH: No, it wasn't like that.

YS: When you left Kumamoto, what sort of things did you bring with you?

MH: My own clothes, one blanket, and several other things. Since I was going all the way to Hawaii, many well-wishers came to see me off with gifts. Then we had lunch and completed eye tests in Nagasaki,

then continued to Kobe and Yokohama, then finally came to Honolulu.

YS: I don't mean to change the story, but when we spoke to the isseis in Kauai, they said they brought teakettles and wash basins.

MH: Oh?

YS: They had heard that there was no tea in Hawaii, so they brought tea, teakettles, and wash basins. You didn't bring anything like that?

MH: I'm sure there were people who brought those things. I did bring a wash basin to wash my face. There were those who brought tea and such.

YS: Now, to continue with the story, at fifteen years old, you had finished elementary school . . .

MH: We finished elementary school at about age thirteen. Lower division elementary school is four years, and then senior division is another four years. I went only as far as second year in senior division. [I am] a man of little education.

YS: You did attend senior elementary school?

MH: I went for two years, then quit. Altogether, I only went to school for six years.

YS: This Mr. Furuta Taro?

MH: He went to America about ten years before and came home with considerable amount of money. He was a neighbor of ours.

YS: Furuta Kiyoshi was Furuta Taro's son?

MH: They were cousins.

YS: He was in Hawaii?

MH: He came alone. Many young men from the neighborhood came. If they waited too long, they wouldn't be able to leave. So, many came to Hawaii. We were only young boys not knowing anything, but that's all we talked about.

YS: You first arrived in Honolulu?

MH: I stayed in Honolulu for about a week or five days.

YS: Were there no boardinghouses then?

MH: There was a Japanese hotel. There were lots of hotels because so many people were coming [from Japan]. Just to sleep one night cost

fifty cents. Really, fifty cents only to sleep on the floor with a mosquito net over us. Meals were extra. But I had to pay to stay in a hotel, so instead I stayed with someone from our next village [in Japan] who lived in an old, large house in Palama. It was an old, junk house. (Laughs) I stayed in their upstairs room for two or three nights. He said to come to his house since it was free for me. (Laughs)

YS: Did you bring enough money from Japan for hotel costs and such?

MH: My father sent some money with me. Before we could get off in Honolulu, we had to show that we had at least enough money for hotel and meals--had to carry at least ten dollars. I had about forty or fifty dollars which my father had given me.

YS: At that time, forty or fifty dollars was a lot of money.

MH: Yes, that was a lot of money. I didn't have to worry about the lack of money.

YS: It must have been a hardship on your father to give forty or fifty dollars.

MH: (Laughs) Even now I think about how my father and mother allowed me to come to Hawaii. (Pause) I really think about that.

YS: You, who came, must have worried. But your parents [must have worried], also.

MH: Yes. (Laughs)

YS: Do you remember the names of the hotels at that time?

MH: There was Higoya, there was Kyushuya. Also there were many which took the name of places [in Japan]. People always stayed in places with familiar names [hotels]. Those from Kumamoto Prefecture went to Higoya, and Kyushuya since Kumamoto is in Kyushu. There were lots of hotels--actually hotels only in name.

YS: You say, "hotels only in name"--what were the rooms like? Large . . .

MH: They were just bare rooms.

YS: How large?

MH: Oh, about twelve feet by twelve feet. We slept on the floor on goza mats with mosquito nets.

YS: One person?

MH: No, five or six would sleep in a room. (Laughs)

YS: So, people from Kumamoto stayed at Higoya. Did you have your meals

outside?

MH: I don't remember too well, but if we ate at the hotel, it was twenty-five cents or thirty cents. Even then it wasn't enough to eat. (Laughs)

YS: What type of food did the hotel serve?

MH: A cup of miso soup and mustard cabbage with some chopped pork. That was about it. (MH says in English: Was very poor kaukau.) Cooked cuttlefish, and also salted salmon. (Laughs)

YS: Salted salmon? That's expensive.

MH: It was cheap then.

YS: At that time?

MH: Yes. A piece of salted salmon this big (gestures)--one whole side--was only fifty cents. Nowadays, a tiny piece (gestures) would cost over one dollar. We had plenty of salted salmon. Lots of large cuttlefish used to come from Japan.

YS: When you came from Japan, did you wear Western clothes or Japanese clothes?

MH: Naturally, Western clothes. With a big collar here (MH points to collar)--a white collar so big it went across the shoulder. That was in the old days. Now . . . . (Laughs) I was so proud, and in Yokohama, got teased that I was a foreigner. (Laughs) No, really . . . . (Laughs)

YS: So, the procedure was to check if you had ten dollars or not . . .

MH: Needed identity papers . . .

YS: And health [papers]?

MH: Yes, health papers, and needed to take another eye test.

YS: You didn't need a [financial] guarantor in Hawaii?

MH: No, the ten dollars was the [financial] guarantor. We had to eat starting tomorrow. There were many people who didn't have it.

YS: What happened to those who didn't have it?

MH: Somehow they passed. Then, at that time, since there were no machines, landowners and plantations sent people who do their hiring to the harbor. People [workmen] were in short supply.

YS: So you stayed in Honolulu about five days, and then came to Maui right away?

MH: Yes, I came to Maui.

YS: From the beginning . . .

MH: I had decided to come to Maui because my friend Furuta Kiyoshi was there.

YS: You stayed in the hotel for three days and the rest of the time in Palama?

MH: The Palama house was there until recently . . . . The neighbor from the next village said why don't I stay with them instead of paying fifty cents a night at the hotel. It was free there.

YS: A very charitable person, eh?

MH: Yes. There were many people like that. Japanese people really helped each other out. Once I went to the plantation, they would all feed me. We were all single, so when we worked, they would give us meals--the Japanese. That's the Japanese virtue. (Pause) Wherever we went in the plantation camp, there was someone to cook for us--sometimes cooking for thirty to forty people. They made their living by cooking and making beds.

YS: Naturally, for a price?

MH: Naturally. They charged about six dollars or seven dollars for one month.

YS: While you were in Honolulu, you didn't have any work at all?

MH: There was no work.

YS: Then you just waited for the ship to Maui?

MH: That's right. I was just waiting for the ship, and then it came.

YS: While you were waiting in Honolulu, you must have had a lot of time during the day?

MH: I spent the few days in Honolulu just looking around. Also there were many people from our area [in Japan] living there. Even though I didn't know Niimi very well, the two of us came to Maui together.

YS: What did you do when you first arrived in Maui?

MH: Niimi, who was three years older than me, was a relative of my friend Miyamoto. I didn't know him very well. I met Niimi through Miyamoto and became friends. Since Miyamoto was detained in Honolulu, Niimi and I came to Maui together. Someone from Niimi's village was at Camp 6, the old airport.



The old, junk ship, Kinau, sailed from Honolulu to Lahaina, and then went to Maalaea in Maui, and then went to Kona. Then it would make the return trip along the same route. It went once a week, completing the course. Usually it arrived in Maalaea midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning--very late.

That night, I hired a car and stayed in a Kahului hotel because I didn't know where to go. Naturally, there was no road from Maalaea to Camp 6, so I stayed at Hanaoka Hotel in Kahului.

YS: Did you walk to Kahului?

MH: No, I came by car that night. That night, I stayed at Hanaoka Hotel. The next morning I hired a car again to go to Camp 6. That next night I stayed with the person from Niimi's village. There was, not from my place, but someone named Nakayama who cooked and made beds for many workmen. We were all single men, so he would feed us for six dollars or seven dollars per month.

YS: Where was your friend Furuta Kiyoshi?

MH: He was in Camp 10. It was way up above Paia and Puunene. [See map section.] Camp 10 developed a lot of new land [for cultivation]. They opened up hundreds of new acreage.

YS: Camp 6, where you first stayed . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

YS: It was a large house? Six rooms?

MH: Yes.

YS: It was like old-time barracks?

MH: That's right. Just a bare room. The corner [rooms] were for the married ones with families, and the middle [rooms] was for single men--five to eight men. There was a small, separate shack for cooking meals. In the middle were single men--slept five to eight to a room. Here was the veranda (gestures). Everyone came here to cook on open fire since there were no stoves then. They burned wood in a rock-lined open pit. They lined up rocks and put a pole here (gestures) and did the cooking. They had nothing then.

YS: What about bath and toilet?

MH: The toilet again was communal--tens of people would all squat together--men and women all together. Bath was also men and women together.



YS: Were duties assigned as to who would heat the bath water?

MH: We paid twenty or twenty-five cents for bath.

YS: Per month?

MH: Yes, per month. There were fifty to eighty people bathing, so it was substantial.

YS: How much did you pay for your room?

MH: It was a plantation house.

YS: You didn't have to pay?

MH: No, didn't pay anything. When we were hired by the plantation, they let us stay here [barracks]. Maybe there were more later, but during the time of Puunene Camp, there were [Camps] 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There were eleven camps. In one camp, there were maybe 80 to 100 men working there.

YS: You stayed at [Camp] 6 the entire time?

MH: No, I only stayed there one night. Niimi, whom I didn't know very well then--he was just a relative of my friend Miyamoto--when we came to Maui together, I paid his boat fare, carfare and his lodging. He sure was a smart man.

(Laughter)

MH: He was three years older [than MH], so he told me to pay for everything. I didn't know if he ever had any money or not, but I paid for everything. He was certainly a smart man. (Chuckles) I paid for everything. Then I stayed in the home of a person from my village [in Japan] named Yagita and went to Kiyoshi's place the next morning. This Niimi had abandoned me by this time.

YS: What do you mean by "abandoned" you?

MH: He was supposed to have gone with me to my (tape garbled), but now he wouldn't have anything to do with me, even after I had paid his way here. I walked from Camp 6 to Camp 10. It must be little more than six miles--I think more than six miles. [See map section.]

YS: By "abandon"--he said for you to go alone?

MH: He said for me to go ahead. He was supposed to have gone with me to my friend's. He wanted to leave me--he didn't care about me. (Chuckles) Times were hard then. I didn't know anything, but . . . . Camp 10 was over there and Maalaea was there . . . . At that time there was no road, only depot road, all dusty. (Laughs)

YS: What happened to Mr. Niimi?

MH: He worked there [Camp 6], then went to America [Mainland]. He didn't even let me know--he didn't write me a letter or anything. I heard he died in America.

YS: In California?

MH: Yes.

YS: When did he die?

MH: I think year and a half . . . . Eventually he received his kompang money and then left for America.

YS: Kompang?

MH: Kompang. He was doing irrigation of cane--that was [for] eighteen months [when the cane was harvested]. He got his pay, and then . . . . Most of the young men worked in Hawaii for a while and then planned to go to America.

YS: Did you study any English at all before coming to Hawaii?

MH: No, not at all. I didn't know any . . .

YS: Didn't you have any difficulties communicating?

MH: Everyone spoke Japanese--I didn't have any difficulties. Thank goodness I could eat, the Japanese . . .

YS: So you went from Camp 6 to Camp 10 . . . . At that time were they all Japanese at the camps?

MH: They were mostly all Japanese.

YS: You say "mostly" Japanese. What other nationalities were there?

MH: The others were Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Chinese. The Puerto Ricans had a separate camp. They're scary! (Laughs) Not so now, but in those days we were afraid of them. Portuguese were not like that. They were good at talking. (Laughs)

YS: You mean they spoke English well?

MH: English, too, they talked a lot.

YS: Why did you say the Puerto Ricans were feared?

MH: Yes, roughnecks. Early in the morning they'd whistle so loud and make a loud fuss, saying this and that. We didn't experience that, but it was rumored so. You know that Puerto Rico's climate is very similar to Hawaii. When they came here, the lifestyle wasn't that different for them. On the other hand, the Japanese people change

a lot when they come here due to the big change in climate and lifestyle. But Puerto Rico wasn't like that.

YS: Was there a big difference in climate between Kumamoto and Maui--Hawaii?

MH: The summer wasn't that different, but when it became winter it was different.

YS: So when you left Kumamoto and came to Hawaii, the change in climate affected you?

MH: Yeah, that happened. Change in climate and the kaukau, the bad water, and having to work every day. In Japan we could say, "It's okay to take the day off today" since it was our own work. We were free to do what we wanted. We didn't have that freedom on the plantation. We had to work ten hours every day.

YS: The climate, temperature, food, water . . .

MH: That's right. That's what I remember. During that time many suffered from beriberi and also from lung disease.

YS: About how many [became sick]?

MH: In my cane irrigation team, there were about eight or nine, and probably half of them became sick and quit.

YS: What happened when people became sick? Was there medical care provided at the plantation?

MH: The plantation did have medical facilities. I'm talking about Puunene, but there were about 7,000 to 8,000 people there [on the plantation]. Close to 10,000 laborers. It was a big company, and everything was done by hand before. Six thousand to 7,000 of that was Japanese; others were Portuguese, Chinese and Korean. Very close to 10,000 people, altogether.

YS: There were medical facilities for all those people? Hospitals and such . . .

MH: Hospital was located in Camp 1, in what was Spreckelsville then.

YS: Was that the only one?

MH: Only one. And there was an extension at the Camp 5 Mill with only one doctor. The hospital was here [Spreckelsville]. The doctor would go over there [to the extension] every day. Since it was a five-mile walk [from Spreckelsville to Puunene Mill], it was difficult for the sick people to go. And once they got there, everyone was so busy, and they didn't even know what medicines were given them [the patients], and they couldn't be examined. There were no

mealtimes with 7,000 or 8,000 people all having to go there.

YS: You first started working at Camp 10?

MH: Yes, I worked there.

YS: What kind of work did you do?

MH: I watered the cane. It was completely different from work in Japan.

YS: How did you do that [irrigation]?

MH: The water flowed down in ditches, so I divide like this . . . . The water was like this (gestures) and the line was like this . . . . I would use a hoe to run the water this way, and that way. Ho, I didn't even have time to eat lunch. (Chuckles)

YS: On both sides of the water ditch?

MH: That's right. The ones who were good, once they got used to it, could weed and irrigate. Ones like me who were new didn't even have time to eat lunch. We ran all over the place. (Laughs)

At that time when water was scarce--there's lots of water now--water was more important than people. The water system was different. In Puunene there were no green leaves. Everything was yellow because water was so scarce. If we wasted even a little bit of water, we were charged half-day [pay]. We'd be penalized for wasting it.

YS: What do you mean by "waste"?

MH: If we were too busy and got careless, the water ran to lower ground. They were so strict about that and scolded us with rage. (Chuckles)

YS: Did that kind of thing happen often?

MH: That's right, in the beginning. We got everything short of being kicked.

YS: Did you ever get kicked?

MH: No, I was never kicked. After the American Civil War, when [Abraham] Lincoln [abolished slavery] . . . . It was a long time after, but the law didn't allow it [physical violence]. But it was still in the hearts of men. It was much like slavery.

YS: Slavery--you mean the overseer?

MH: The overseers were very strict.

YS: What kind of people were the overseers?

MH: Almost all Portuguese. Above them were the white men.

YS: They're called lunas?

MH: Lunas were all Portuguese. They were because they could talk.  
(Laughs) Above that was the Caucasian field boss called "ō luna,"  
the big foreman.

YS: What did you call him? "ō luna"?

MH: ō luna--the big luna. (Laughs)

YS: Ah, ō luna? A combination of Japanese and English.

(Laughter)

MH: That's right.

YS: In Japanese, "ō" means "big" . . .

MH: Above that another Caucasian . . .

YS: An ō ō luna?

(Laughter)

YS: A super luna or something.

(Laughter)

YS: The luna was overseer for a certain number of people?

MH: Directly [supervised] about thirty or 50 people. Above him was the field boss who supervised so many fields; above him was the one who supervised several thousand people in the camp.

YS: And above them was the plantation boss?

MH: That's right, the plantation boss.

YS: Then the organization set up was: a plantation boss, under him were several field bosses, and under them were . . .

MH: There were several lunas.

YS: And under them were small [minor] lunas.

MH: That's right, that's right. In the beginning, before I was used to the work, if I took a day off, the camp police would chase us out. They asked why we're not at work if not sick, and why we don't go to the doctor if not well. It was a five-mile walk to the doctor, so I hid under the house to rest.

(Laughter)

YS: How long did you stay in hiding?

MH: (Laughs) We really did hide under the house. If we were caught, they would drag us out by the neck because there was a shortage of labor at that time. (Laughs)

YS: I suppose the camp police knew about people hiding under houses?

MH: Of course they knew. We would run away when they came with their big boots. (Laughs) They kicked the doors open and (chuckles) grabbed us by the neck--we were problem rascals. (Chuckles) It was like slavery. I worked there [Camp 10] for, I think, three months, and then went to Wailuku because the work was just too hard. Wailuku was easier.

YS: So you changed because the labor was so hard?

MH: That's right.

YS: Were you able to leave the camp so easily? Once you were in a camp, were you bound to that place, or you could leave . . .

MH: No, I could leave at will. That's right. There was a rail station at Camp 1 [Spreckelsville]. I carried my belongings there. (Chuckles) The train ran from Wailuku to Kahului to Camp 1 to Paia Mill. A one-coach train ran between those points. Only fifteen cents from one station to station.

YS: As you mentioned before, about the Civil War time when the plantation slaves could not leave . . .

MH: We could leave at will. Of course, they didn't like us to leave since labor was short, but we could leave when we wanted to. It was a hardship, but the people who came before me experienced greater hardships. My friend Furuta came to see me at the depot, all black.

YS: Why was he all black?

MH: With dust--all black. After ten-hour work day, pau hana was 4:30 in the afternoon.

YS: What time [did you start work] in the morning?

MH: Six o'clock in the morning.

YS: This was in Puunene?

MH: Yes. Everywhere was all the same. The irrigation workers didn't have a lunch time because the water ran [continuously].

YS: How many years was Mr. Furuta here before you came?

MH: About one year. He was here one year before.

YS: He certainly endured a lot of things.

MH: He worked hard. There were three men in a room--two were from Yamaguchi Prefecture, one named Kawano, the other Dogen. One was a drinker and the other was a patient and persevering man. Furuta slept in the same room with these two.

YS: Dogen and . . . .

MH: A man named Dogen. He was a fine man.

YS: And the other person?

MH: The other one didn't gamble, but liked this. (MH gestures as if drinking.) (Laughs) He slept, in their company, half covering himself with a blanket to protect himself from mosquitoes. No mosquito net . . . .

When I arrived at the hotel [in Honolulu] . . . . At that time, many went to America [Mainland] as soon as they made a little money. So, one of them said, "Since I'm going to America, why don't you buy my mosquito net." It was only a small one--only \$1.50 or \$2.00. I bought it and brought it to [Furuta] Kiyoshi's place at Camp 10. We slept together in my mosquito net. (Laughs)

YS: Was a mosquito net a luxury item at that time, then?

MH: Well, it was made from cheesecloth. Cheesecloth was cheap then. I think it was ten cents per yard.

YS: Did you make the mosquito net? Or was it already made?

MH: We would have the women in the camp sew it for us. That's why it could be made for \$1.50 or \$2.00.

YS: Where did you get the cheesecloth?

MH: There were many stores.

YS: Where?

MH: There was a large plantation store in Puunene. It supplied everything you needed, on credit.

YS: Which camp was that?

MH: Camp 1 [Spreckelsville]. Also, Camp 5 [Puunene] had a large store that supplied everything.



YS: The drinker from Yamaguchi you were talking about earlier--did he buy his liquor from the plantation store?

MH: That's right. In those days, everything was charged using our own plantation number. (Laughs) And the office deducted what we had charged. (Laughs)

YS: Were there ever times when there was nothing left [after deductions from paycheck]?

MH: There was nothing left.

(Laughter)

MH: The single men had to pay the cook \$6.50 or \$7.00 each month for preparing their meals for them--even the lunch. As long as we worked, the meals were prepared for us.

YS: Did you only shop at the plantation store?

MH: No, the Japanese stores also came.

YS: They came?

MH: Yes, many. All on charge. They came in the evening to take our order, and delivered the next day.

YS: Where did they come from?

MH: Puunene. There were many Japanese stores here in Paia, too. Also Kahului and Wailuku. The Japanese stores came to take our order and accepted charges.

YS: This is still the year you first came to Maui? Nineteen six [1906]?

MH: Nineteen six [1906]--they came until before World War II. After the World War, they pau.

YS: They came to take orders in 1906 when you first came?

MH: Yes, they came. Watchmakers and many others came to the camp. They brought many things for sale. The Japanese stores had difficulties in starting because . . . . We had Japanese tanomoshi. A group of about ten to twelve men put in ten dollars each or maybe five dollars each, and bid to borrow. In the old days, didn't they have them in Japan, too?

YS: We had them, too. Did you join a tanomoshi?

MH: I joined one. Then . . .

YS: When you were at Camp 10?



MH: No, not at that time. I didn't qualify then. (Laughs)

YS: After you went to Wailuku then?

MH: Yes.

YS: What were the member qualifications?

MH: If you borrowed, the next month you had to pay.

YS: In order to join the tanomoshi . . .

MH: To join, anyone who wanted to could join.

YS: There was no age requirement?

MH: No, nothing like that.

YS: How much did you pay as admission fee?

MH: Admission fee was five dollars since it was five-dollar shares. Or sometimes ten-dollar shares. About ten to twelve men. If someone needed money next month, they would bid with two witnesses present.

YS: If one wanted to borrow fifteen dollars, how did the bid work?

MH: After paying fifteen dollars, I would maybe bid \$1.50. The bid would deduct \$1.50 from the \$15.00 as interest. If someone bid \$1.25, they'd give to the higher bidder who bid \$1.50. For instance, \$1.50 subtracted from \$15.00--I would get \$13.50 [out of each share. Each member would receive \$1.50 from MH]. Next month I would have to pay the full amount, the fifteen dollars. That's how the tanomoshi-kō worked. There were many everywhere. This was the Japanese people's one strength.

And also, when the cane harvest was finished [i.e., kompany], if the cane grew well, we would be given \$100, \$200 for that.

YS: A bonus?

MH: I suppose you can call it bonus. The Japanese people would go to borrow that money if they didn't have any.

YS: That extra money--the bonus, \$100 or \$200--where did it go?

MH: To the individual Japanese people. If you got \$200 or \$300, someone who didn't have their own money--to open a store, for instance--would come to borrow from those who received [bonus] kompany money, usually taking goods such as fish as interest. (Laughs) That was the Japanese system of finance in those times--tanomoshi association and such [other means of borrowing] . . . . And all the things they [stores] came to sell at the camps were on

credit. (Chuckles) It was a hard time for everyone.

YS: Tanomoshi and---the second part I'm not so familiar with since we don't have such things in Japan. You mean, if you did good work, you would receive extra money?

MH: That's right. [MH is explaining the kompang system to YS.]

YS: That money went to individuals?

MH: The plantation gave certain groups . . .

YS: Ah, it went to groups?

MH: That's right. In the groups, if this person worked 200 days, or this person only 110 days and didn't work 90 days, it was divided accordingly.

YS: It was divided among the people. So people went to borrow from those who received the money?

MH: No, no, it was after it was divided. The plantation allotted the amount due from that person, so it became the individual's. Each person was given his share. That's what the store owners went to borrow (chuckles), taking fish and other goods. (Laughs)

YS: The store owners needed to borrow for financing [their stores]?

Mrs. Matsuoka [MH's daughter]: The store owners would go and borrow the money--you know, the bonus they had--it was borrowed from individuals. In order to borrow that, the store boss would take fish and other . . .

YS: The store owners needed money for their business, so is that why they went to borrow from individuals?

MH: That's right--that's why they borrowed.

YS: Oh, I understand now..

MH: They needed to borrow because in the camp, everything was charged [on credit].

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 7-11-1-79 TR; SIDE ONE

MH: There were many Japanese wholesalers who came each month to each store to sell goods. Also, [Theo H.] Davies Company and American Factors of Honolulu came. They [store owners] would buy from them with

borrowed money from tanomoshi or kompang money and [sell everything] on charge.

YS: When they bought on charge, was there interest included?

MH: No, [store customers] charged without interest. But the one who borrowed had to pay interest. The people who charged [from stores] didn't have interest. Many stores went bankrupt if they got stuck [with patrons who didn't pay].

After I left the plantation, all my friends passed away. I had a friend in Wailuku who was the same age as me--he had gone up to junior high school. I became sick after he died--about two months later. I was in the camp hospital for two weeks with typhoid fever. Ho, so much typhoid fever due to poor kaukau and bad [living] condition.

YS: Before you went to Wailuku, you were in Camp 10 for three months?

MH: Yes.

YS: At that time, money . . .

MH: Money (laughs) was maybe only fifteen or thirteen dollars a month because I couldn't work every day. They paid only eighteen dollars for a whole month if we worked twenty-six days. The work was too hard for me.

YS: Was the wage paid by the hour?

MH: No, no, per day.

YS: How much per day?

MH: It was eighteen dollars per month, so sixty-nine cents a day.

YS: What about your meals?

MH: For meals, we had to pay \$7.00 or \$6.50 a month. Also ten cents per month for letters that came from Japan.

YS: Delivery?

MH: Ten cents for one month for delivery of mail.

(Laughter)

MH: And the bath, I think . . .

YS: How much was it for baths?

MH: I think the bath was twenty-five cents. Well, those were the

expenses in the camp.

YS: Did you have money left over?

MH: About five dollars or three dollars was left over [after expenses].

YS: Did you save that amount?

MH: (Laughs) That's right. That was about average for most workers then. Of course, those who were healthy and could work more received more. A young boy like me who couldn't work every day naturally got less.

YS: When the camp stores borrowed money, how did they repay it?

MH: You say "camp" [stores], but actually it was the townspeople.

YS: Oh, townspeople . . .

MH: Yes. It was Japanese stores from the outside.

YS: Oh, they were the ones who came to borrow money?

MH: That's right, that's right. They [the Japanese stores] were privately-owned stores. There were many stores here before. But the big store was the plantation store, with plantation capital.

YS: The store owners outside the plantation, they repaid the money, didn't they?

MH: Of course, they repaid. That camp . . . . (Laughs) Many stores went bankrupt in 1910, 1912 . . .

YS: The plantation store . . .

MH: No, no. Plantation store couldn't go broke because it was owned by the plantation. But the outside Japanese stores had to give up if they couldn't collect [debts].

YS: How much did the store owners borrow from each individual?

MH: They borrowed thousands of dollars. Three hundred from this person, \$400 from this person--he borrowed a lot.

YS: Why did they lend him the money?

MH: Because of the interest. They paid more interest. The greedy plantation workers looked at the higher interest and lent him money. (Laughs) Because he paid high interest and also brought all sorts of goods. (Laughs) Brought fish and such [as interest] . . . . (Laughs)

YS: Then the stores went bankrupt . . .

MH: All the Japanese went bankrupt. One went broke, then the next one, and next one.

YS: Why did they go bankrupt?

MH: It was because the big wholesalers from Honolulu came here, and with the wholesalers here, made agreements with the plantation.

YS: So the big wholesalers from Honolulu were tied up with the plantation?

MH: That's right, that's right. And became a trustee.

YS: What about the people who lent the money?

MH: (MH says in English: Can do nothing. (Laughs) Me, I never lose.)

YS: You didn't lose money?

MH: No, I didn't lose any. The plantation work was so hard, so, looking for easier work I went--there was a Japanese store where the Ikeda Store is now--I went there to become the stable boy. In those days there were no machines, all by horses. (MH says in English: As stable boy, I cut the grass for the horse; I help (tape garbled).) I was the youngest and the new man, but . . .

YS: Was it the Nakayama Store?

MH: Yes, Nakayama.

YS: You said you stayed at Camp 10 for three months--and then?

MH: And then went to Wailuku for four or five months to work, then went back to Puunene Camp. We all worked together again. It was at that time that all the friends got sick and died. Only half were left. I was the weakest but didn't get sick. Then the ones who were left received, I think, about seventy-five dollars for a year and a half's work.

YS: You were in Puunene for a year and a half?

MH: Yes.

YS: What did you do in Wailuku?

MH: In Wailuku I did plantation work [for Wailuku Sugar Company], so only eighteen dollars a month . . .

YS: What kind of work did you do in Wailuku?

MH: As usual, I (MH continues in English: cut cane, cut grass, all

kind of plantation jobs.) And then . . .

YS: So the plantation work at Wailuku at that time . . .

MH: The work was easier in Wailuku. The climate was better, and the town was close by. The other places didn't have towns. In Wailuku there was a small town; there was Market Street. But our place became one company, and I came [back] to Puunene to the cane kompang--called hanawai kompang. Irrigation kompang.

YS: Did you do kompang in Wailuku?

MH: No, not in Wailuku--it was individual.

YS: When you came to Puunene, you did kompang?

MH: That's right. It was at the beginning of kompang when almost half of my group got sick.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MH: By kompang, it was an irrigation contract for eighteen months. (MH says in English: We got to take care hoeing, and all kind--take care for the cane growing. Suppose in your field pretty good for growing, but second field ground so hard, hard to grow.)

YS: In Japanese would be fine.

MH: In the first planting, the cane grew well because the ground is soft. But the bonus received afterwards was a lot of money--\$300 was big money then.

YS: Three hundred dollars then would be like \$3,000 today?

MH: More--probably \$30,000. Sure. (Laughs) Because now, men earn \$30 or \$40 for one day's work. At that time, one day was how much?

YS: In the kompang, how large was the land?

MH: Each group was assigned a certain size land, usually seven acres per person. One group was formed like that. If seventy acres, ten men.

YS: As you said before, to do kompang, you received fifteen dollars in advance. Then you received a bonus depending on how you grew [cane]?

MH: That's right, that's right. They gave it to us three months after harvesting.

YS: In the kompang, generally, those who were experienced were selected?

MH: I suppose so. Those who were hard workers were given jobs.

YS: Because you were kompany, because you made more money, was it easier for you to buy from the stores?

MH: They'd give us credit. For those with families, since fifteen dollars was not enough, they gave us credit against our bonus. Needed to buy meat and fish and vegetables . . . . (Laughs)

YS: You had to repay everything after the eighteen-month period?

MH: That's right. Those who grew a lot [of cane] received more, and those who were not able to grow much received less. They [plantation] would compute it for us. The first time I did kompany, I only received about seventy-five dollar bonus. The second time, it was a new field, so I received about \$250.

YS: How long were you in the Puunene kompany? About a year?

MH: I was there for three years. (MH says in English: That time, eighteen months, you got to stay there. You got to work.) The work was too hard, so that's why I came to the [Nakayama] store even though the money [pay] was less [at the store]. Because my friend, who is now buried in Wailuku, passed away at that time. He became sick and passed away. Three months after he passed away, I also got sick and spent two or three weeks in the hospital. Right after I got out [of the hospital], after one day, I didn't go back to the plantation. (Laughs) I thought I'd better do easier work even if it meant less money. So I came to the store.

The one who's buried in Wailuku was Furuta Kiyoshi's cousin. He and I went to school together. We were the same age. This is going back again, but at the time we entered the kompany, Furuta Kiyoshi was the first one to get sick. After him, Miyamoto Kenji, and many others got sick and finally, half of them quit the kompany.

Even though Furuta Kiyoshi came [to Hawaii] one year before me, he had no money because of his illness. So I went from camp to camp in the evenings to take up a collection [to send Furuta Kiyoshi back to Japan]. Donations were fifteen cents or a quarter. Nobody gave fifty cents since that was a whole day's pay for a kompany man. They gave only fifteen cents or twenty-five cents. I walked from camp to camp. But the money couldn't be raised, so I drew from the tanomoshi and sent him home.

I saw him off at Maalaea at midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning. At that time, the steamer fee was sixty dollars from Honolulu to Yokohama. It was only \$2.50 from Maui to Honolulu. I don't remember how much for the hotel in Honolulu, but I figured out all the expenses and sent money with him. That's how he went home to Japan.

YS: Furuta?

MH: Yes, Furuta Kiyoshi. [I did this] because he was my neighbor. I



was only about seventeen or eighteen years old. (MH says in English: No more shoe, dirty clothes. (Laughs) Barefoot. Really.)

YS: What about Furuta's cousin?

MH: At the time I saw Furuta Kiyoshi off in Maalaea, this Takaki Sadamitsu, Furuta Kiyoshi's cousin, was groaning with typhoid fever. Then he was put in a Wailuku hospital. There was a Japanese doctor there named Mori Tokusada. He was a soldier during the Russo-Japanese War. He said for me to bring him there, and that he would help carry him there.

Takaki Sadamitsu was a childhood friend of mine--we went to school together. He came [to Hawaii] just after graduating from junior high school. At that time, there weren't many who graduated from junior high. He came because he was hired as a [Japanese language] teacher at the Wailuku Hongwanji. I don't know why he didn't go there. He wouldn't go, saying he was embarrassed to teach children. (Laughs) So he did plantation work.

YS: Then he became sick?

MH: Then he became sick. Then Dr. Mori Tokusada---you know where it's now--Market Street in Wailuku . . .

YS: You told us last time how you slept near Takaki when his fever was so high and tried to lower his fever.

MH: (Laughs) At that time, the doctor didn't give ice. They gave ice at the plantation [hospital] for cooling [the fever], but at the Japanese hospital, we had to buy the ice. One block was twenty-five cents. It was cheap, but I didn't have twenty-five cents every day. I took care of him for about two weeks in Wailuku.

What I did was (chuckles), I took him to the washhouse. You know, there was something like a (tape garbled) with only a mattress and . . . . (MH says in English: Water cool over here, every twenty-four hours.) I cooled him with water, using a tablecloth or something, cutting a puka for the head and putting a towel here [across his chest] so the water won't spill. (MH gestures) If he moved even a little bit, the towel would come off, so I had to watch him day and night.

(MH says in English: "Water cool," I go tell my grandchild.

[MH's grandchild said], "I no believe you.) There's no such foolish thing."

(MH says in English: But no can help, that's best way I do.)

YS: Did Mr. Takaki get well?

MH: After I cared for him for two weeks, he got well, but didn't have a



place to go. So I brought him to Puunene. In Puunene, he stayed home and did the cooking while I went to work. So we lived together. He stayed with me for three months. Then he went back to Wailuku to work. After he had finally recovered, about one year later, he got sick again. He got sick again about the same time the following year. Since we were friends, when I had time, I went to visit him in Wailuku.

YS: He became sick, and then what happened to Mr. Takaki?

MH: Then he passed away about one year later.

YS: Did you come to Nakayama Store after Mr. Takaki passed away?

MH: That's right.

YS: Is there still a Nakayama Store?

MH: No, it's no longer there.

YS: What kind of a store was the Nakayama Store?

MH: (MH says in English: Plantation collection not too good. That's why he no can pay the wholesale store.)

YS: Where was it located?

MH: You know, down here is the Ikeda Store, the department store . . .

WN: Lower Paia?

MH: Lower Paia. There used to be the Nakayama Store there.

YS: What's now the Ikeda Store was the Nakayama Store?

MH: No, no. The building is different, but it was near there.

YS: Close by?

MH: Yes.

YS: What was your reason for starting work at the Nakayama Store?

MH: The reasons were that the plantation work was too hard for me, and also I thought if I continued like that, I'd lose out because I got sick, too.

YS: Did you know anyone at the Nakayama Store when you started working there?

MH: Yes, I knew the people who worked there, and I knew Nakayama from the times he came to the plantation. He offered me a job to come

work for him.

YS: So you gained the confidence of the Nakayama Store?

MH: Yes. I was the youngest and the newest man . . .

YS: Were you about twenty-one?

MH: No, twenty years old. (MH says in English: Stable boy cut grass for the horse. I help for the store. Kōkua help for the plantation camp, like that. But I stay about two year--Nakayama Store bankrupt.)

YS: Did you do things such as delivery?

MH: Yes. When Nakayama Store went bankrupt, they owed \$700 to the big plantation store in Paia. There was a big plantation store in Paia, then there was the [Theo H. Davies] Company of Honolulu who came once a month. American Factors. (MH says in English: Plenty Japanese stores came take order from the plantation people.) Every month they took orders and made collections, but they [plantation people] couldn't pay, so they gave up. Davies Company still remembers.

YS: Did Nakayama buy from Davies Company?

MH: Yes, they bought from them. Bought a lot from them. All the Japanese stores--Hata Store wasn't there at that time--Odo Store, Yamamoto Store. (MH says in English: Plenty Japanese store come from Honolulu, you know.) Maui has Paia Store . . .

YS: So Nakayama Store had accumulated debts to those stores?

MH: Yes, there were debts.

YS: How many hundreds of dollars?

MH: It was thousands of dollars. I'm not sure exactly, but I think there was a \$700 to \$800 debt to the Davies Company. They were very angry about not being repaid. Davies Company gave Nakayama an ultimatum to pay up in one week before going to Hana to make other collections.

YS: Why couldn't he repay?

MH: It was because collection was bad [from the plantation workers]. Because he couldn't pay, he . . . . (Laughs) (MH says in English: "You take one week. I come back from Hana.")

But Nakayama had planned on declaring bankruptcy by the time the Davies Company [representative] returned from Hana. I didn't know that at the time. Then he hid lots of merchandise at the camp--aikāne's place. When Davies came back, it [the store] looked different from one week before. It was empty because the good merchandise was

hidden in the camp. I didn't know anything about this. (Laughs)

So Davies was the loser for becoming so angry. He [Nakayama] had hidden everything. They looked all around [the store], but couldn't do anything. (Laughs)

Then it became very serious--now money couldn't be collected from the camp [kompang workers] anymore. The Japanese people who had lent the money became very angry. There was a meeting every night on what to do about the situation. Finally, they gave up.

YS: Were there many stores that went bankrupt like the Nakayama Store?

MH: Yes, there were many--the Kozuki Store down there, Tanaka Store . . .

YS: Kozuki?

MH: Yes. Kozuki who's in Wailuku--that Kozuki. Then it was his father who ran it. And also Tanaka Store. There were others. They all used the camp charge system--no cash at that time. They made the collection, and then paid the wholesale store. (Laughs)

YS: Again, what kind of work did you do at the Nakayama Store?

MH: There were two or three wagons. (MH says in English: Morning time get up, cut grass for the horse. No more electricity, no more pipe. No more pipe water.)

There were mostly wells. Sometimes the wells were salt water. We took bottles to the rail station to get water. (MH says in English: Only mud road because . . . )

YS: Working on the plantation, you received sixty-five cents per day there, right? How much did you get at the Nakayama Store?

MH: Oh, about twenty or twenty-two dollars.

YS: A month?

MH: Yes, a month.

YS: Did you do things such as deliveries to the camps?

MH: Yes. I was a helper to the order man. I did all kinds of jobs since I was the youngest and the newest man. There were five or six men older than me. There were many [employees].

YS: When you sold things at the camp, someone went there to take orders, right?

MH: Yes, orders were taken every day.

YS: And someone would bring the orders back . . .

MH: Take the orders, and we delivered the merchandise the next day.

YS: How did you deliver?

MH: We wrapped and [loaded onto] two-horse wagon, one-horse wagon.

YS: Was it a two-wheeled wagon?

MH: Yes, two-wheeled. At that time, there were no trucks yet. Small one- or two-horse wagon.

YS: You loaded it onto that?

MH: Yes. Every day we distributed the goods.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

YS: We'd like to hear more about the Nakayama Store--how many places you went around to, and what types of merchandise you delivered.

MH: There were everyday items such as grocery, clothes and housewares. There were many different items. In those days, one store carried everything. Small stores needed to have everything in order to do business.

YS: What sold best?

MH: Naturally, groceries and clothes.

YS: Rice?

MH: We had rice, canned goods, dry goods--there were all kinds of things.

YS: Besides groceries, were there toys?

MH: There were few such things, [but] had everything. Probably the Japanese stores now still carry all those things.

YS: Compared to the plantation store . . .

MH: The only difference was, it [plantation store] was bigger. The plantation store was much bigger, so it did more business. Then, the Japanese stores cut in, carrying shirts, pants, dry goods--even medicine.

YS: Even though the plantation had a big store, the Japanese plantation

workers preferred to buy from the smaller Japanese stores? Were there things the big plantation store did not have?

MH: Something like that. But the plantation store had everything.

YS: The Nakayama Store was more oriented to the Japanese people . . .

MH: They had mostly everything Japanese people needed. Nakayama, Kozuki, Tanaka, all of them. There was the only shoe store in Kahului. Shimoda Store was also there; other Japanese stores were there. There were many others to attract the plantation people. It was all charge [on credit].

YS: If the plantation store had everything, were there any specialities that only the Japanese stores carried?

MH: Yes, I suppose there were. The Honolulu wholesalers imported things from Japan to sell here. There were many Japanese wholesale stores in Honolulu.

YS: So you worked at Nakayama Store for two years, then you went to the Kaupakulua liquor store?

MH: That's right. When Nakayama Store closed down, every one [of the employees] was let go except me. They figured since I was a fool and wouldn't make trouble, they could keep me around to do collections--to collect the old debts for the new trustee, which was now the Paia [Plantation] Store. Paia Store was the largest in Hawaii. They took charge as the new trustee. They let all the others go but kept me for about three to four more months to collect the camp balance. Then I sold out all the store's merchandise.

YS: You sold all the merchandise that was left over from the Nakayama Store?

MH: You could say I sold them, but actually, the others all wanted to take them. (Laughs) In only half a day, it was all gone. Then, since I didn't have a job anymore here, I went to Kaupakulua Wine and Liquor Company.

YS: What was the name?

MH: Its whole name was Kaupakulua Wine Brewery. Its branch in Haiku sold every kind of liquor--Japanese sake. The other side [Kaupakulua] only did the manufacturing part. I found work there right away, without even taking a day off.

YS: What did they make at the brewery? Was it whiskey?

MH: Wine.

YS: Only wine?

MH: Yes, only wine. The Portuguese in Kaupakulua used to grow acres of grapes to produce that wine. Kaupakulua wine was distributed by liquor stores all over the state of Hawaii. Here, a Portuguese named Souza had the brewery. He opened the branch [in Haiku] and sold everything from whiskey to beer to wine. American wine, Italian wine--he sold everything.

That time, I went to work there without even taking one day off from work. Salary at other stores was about thirty or thirty-five dollars [a month] at that time, but I got sixty or seventy dollars right from the start. Sixty or seventy dollars salary was big money for me.

YS: What kinds of things did you do there at the liquor store--what type of work?

MH: My job was to take orders and then distribute. Also at that time, the water supply came from about fifty miles away. At the beginning, it flowed in an open ditch. That's why the water was so bad. All kinds of things such as wood and cow dung flowed in it since it was above ground. By the time it got here, it looked like miso soup. Then an underground tunnel was dug--all that way. At that time, it took more than a thousand Japanese laborers.

WN: Oh, Maliko.

MH: Maliko--all that way from there. Dug all the way from up there, and the tunnel ended about here [Paia]. There was an engineering college professor from America [Mainland] who was hired by the plantation.

WN: Tunnel or bridge?

MH: Tunnel. In the beginning, since a tunnel would be expensive to dig, they dug a ditch on top. It started from fifty miles away. Dug a tunnel all that way.

YS: How many years did this take?

MH: Oh, it took a long time--ten to fifteen years.

YS: When was this--when the tunnel was dug?

MH: Let's see . . . . I don't know when it was started, but it took until about 1925. Then it was changed to all concrete. That took so many more years.

YS: How many?

MH: To make it all concrete. You know if it was like that [dirt], the water would leak, but with concrete, it flowed right through. It took so many more years to do that, but I don't know all the details.

Mr. Force was the engineer, and the surveyor was Mr. Okada. Okada has a son in Honolulu. He passed away four or five years ago. He was also an engineer. Mr. Okada was born in Japan, a man with little education. (MH says in English: But talk about head.) He learned everything from Mr. Force and became a surveyor. It was quite a job--there was fifty miles.

YS: Where did the 1,000 Japanese laborers come from?

MH: They were former plantation workers who came there to work. Several gangs were formed--ten or twelve gangs. Fifteen or twenty men were assembled and worked under one gang boss.

YS: Was the tunnel dug by hand?

MH: It was mostly by dynamite.

YS: Was the pay better than at the plantation?

MH: Because Paia and Puunene were almost the same company. [Maui Agricultural Company and Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company were both subsidiaries of Alexander and Baldwin.] Before, there also was the Haiku Sugar Company. This Haiku Sugar Company came to Hamakua Poko--there's an old sugar mill there. There was a small sugar mill in Haiku before--Dr. Baldwin's place. Then the mill came to Hamakua Poko. Then here in Paia was a sugar mill--the Maui Agriculture Company. They merged with Haiku Sugar and became the Maui Agriculture Company [in 1903]. Puunene was HC&S Company [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company]. HC&S Company built their mill about 100 years before [in 1902].

YS: Was the Maliko tunnel built after you came to work for the liquor company?

MH: No, it was before. Anyway, this Maui Agriculture Company and HC&S Company both were part of the East Maui Irrigation Company. It was the East Maui Irrigation Company that dug the tunnel. These two companies dug the tunnel.

YS: You got married while working at the liquor store?

MH: That's right, that's right.

YS: You sent for your wife from Japan?

MH: She came in 1913. In 1912, I quit here [Paia], and about one year after I went there [Haiku], my wife came.

YS: How did you . . . . (Laughs)

MH: My mother was in the hospital with breast cancer for a long time, and my wife was nursing her. When my mother was dying, she asked



her to become her son's wife. That's how she came here. As my mother was dying in Japan . . . .

YS: Oh, your mother in Japan---as she was being nursed . . . .

MH: That's right. She came after being asked if she would become her son's wife in Hawaii.

YS: Oh, is that right? Then a relative . . .

MH: That's right. At that time, I was twenty-three or twenty-four. It was 1913.

YS: Did you know her in Japan?

MH: Oh yes, I knew her. (Pause) My mother had her breast removed. Nowadays, it's not too serious, but before . . . . She was in the Prefectural Hospital.

YS: Then it was breast cancer?

MH: Yes, breast cancer. That's why she [MH's wife] came here. All the tunnel workers were young, single men who gambled and drank a lot. They worked hard, but they drank hard too, so I sure sold a lot of liquor.

WN: Was it a retail or wholesale company?

MH: Retail and wholesale, both.

YS: You didn't own the liquor store, did you?

MH: No, no. I only worked there.

YS: Were there any troubles with women at that time?

MH: No, there was nothing like that.

YS: Then how did the young men . . . . Women . . . .

MH: The women were . . . . At that time, it was a small town here, but it had two hotels.

YS: What hotel?

MH: Japanese hotels. Beyond here, there was no store or anything, so everybody came out to [Lower] Paia town.

YS: That's where the women were?

MH: That's right. It was very lively here then. There were gambling casinos here, women were here . . . .



YS: Where did the women come from? From Japan?

MH: I suppose so because the second generation [women in Hawaii] was too young. And the [railroad] station was only to here [Paia], so from here [Paia] to here [Haiku], they had to come in cars or walk. So everyone congregated here [Paia], making it a very lively place.

YS: There were brothels there then?

MH: Yes. That can't be helped . . . .

YS: I suppose it can't be helped everywhere. In such a setting, drink, gambling and women were basic.

(Laughter)

MH: It was such a lively place. Then in Haiku, homestead land became available.

WN: Homestead--Hawaiian people?

MH: No, all haole. All white men from Honolulu and elsewhere had the chance [to buy the land]. Also in Maui, it was a chance for lawyers and schoolteachers. One share was about thirty or thirty-five acres, and about forty became available. Tanaka was the only Japanese to get a share. I think maybe the Portuguese got some, also.

In order to get to the homestead, the railroad ran all the way to the Haiku Cannery. At that time, the Maliko Bridge was the largest steel bridge in Hawaii. It was made in America [Mainland] and just assembled here. It was about 300 feet high. There was the Maliko Bridge and two other bridges there. At that time, the bridge ironworkers all came from America. All the haoles came to do riveting and such because the people in Hawaii didn't know this type of work. Then in 1912 or 1913, the bridge was finished.

YS: What year did you say? Nineteen . . . .

MH: About 1913, I think. By the time I went over there, we used to pass on it.

YS: Nineteen thirteen [1913]? The year you got married?

MH: Yes. Not everything was finished, but we used it then.

YS: Let's go back a little. The Kaupakulua liquor store wholesaled, didn't they?

MH: No, no wholesale. It was a retail store. [MH worked at the retail branch in Haiku.] Wholesale was all done by the manufacturing plant.

YS: Where was the wholesaler located?

MH: In Kaupakulua. They made tens of thousands of gallons.

YS: It wasn't the factory that you worked in then?

MH: No, no. I was at the retail store [in Haiku].

YS: What was its name?

MH: Of course, since it was a branch, it was the Kaupakulua Wine and Liquor Co.

YS: So you stayed there all the way until you went to do pineapple work?

MH: That's right. You know that right after the First World War was over, in 1917, Prohibition came.

YS: Prohibition was a little bit after that, right? Around 1920--would that be Taisho 9?

MH: I think it became Prohibition in Taisho---1917, Prohibition came. (Pause) When did the First World War end?

YS: Nineteen nineteen [1919]. So, Prohibition was in 1920.

MH: Ah, Prohibition was in 1920 . . . . It was before that. Anyway, I know it was in 1917. It was the time I quit there to become a taxi driver. [Prohibition was in effect between 1920-1933.]

YS: That's before you worked in the pineapple fields?

MH: That's right. I think Prohibition was in 1917.

YS: Why did you quit the Kaupakulua Liquor Company? It must have been very profitable?

MH: It wasn't that good. I sold a lot, but the Portuguese and others didn't sell much. I handled practically all the sales for that company, but when Prohibition came, I had to quit. Then I . . .

YS: America entered into World War in 1917, right?

MH: It was 1914.

YS: In 1914, the war started, but it was 1917 when America entered into it.

MH: Oh, is that right. It was 1914 when the World War started.

YS: So even though you sold a lot, since the others didn't do very well, the liquor store didn't financially . . .

MH: It didn't do very well.

YS: Is that why you quit?

MH: No, it was bone dry in 1917 because of Prohibition. It became so liquor couldn't be made or sold. [The sale of liquor may have been restricted during World War I.]

YS: It became so the Japanese didn't drink at all?

MH: Yes.

YS: What about the tunnel workers who drank so much before? Wasn't it difficult for them to suddenly stop?

MH: (Laughs) It couldn't be helped. There was no more.

YS: Wasn't there any bootleg liquor made?

MH: After that, bootlegging was started.

YS: Where did the bootleggers get the liquor?

MH: From sugar. It was distilled from sugar.

YS: Where did they get the sugar?

MH: It was bought from the mills.

YS: How was it made?

MH: I don't know for sure, but sugar was the base. They used yeast in the sugar and cooked it, then left it to ferment for about two weeks.

YS: You didn't . . .

MH: I didn't do that. Bootleggers made a lot of money.

YS: That kind of thing was done in the open?

MH: No. Naturally, the liquor inspectors came and charged \$100, \$200 . . . . (Laughs)

YS: Charged? You mean to buy the liquor?

MH: They would charge a fine. But the Portuguese continued to make it and sell to the camps. Also, Kennedy's father [Joseph Kennedy] used to make bootleg in Canada to ship here. It was big money. Near Lake Michigan, there's a place called Kennedy property--a town near there. Lake Michigan--I went there.

YS: What's the name of the place?

MH: Lake Michigan. This town belongs to the Kennedys. A huge, beautiful place. (Pause) It's the same as being told to quit smoking cigarettes. How many American women smoke now? When we could drink before, no woman drank, but when Prohibition came, they started to drink. In the same way, if cigarettes were banned, there would be young men making lots of money illegally. Isn't that right? Women didn't drink before.

YS: This is sort of digressing, but while I was at the University of Michigan working on my master's degree, I studied how Prohibition affected the entire country . . .

MH: Is that so.

YS: Then you went to grow pineapples . . . . (Pause) You must be tired now, so we'll be back later.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 7-20-2-79 TR and 7-21-2-79 TR

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Hayashida (MH)

November 30, 1979

Lower Paia, Maui

BY: Yukihsa Suzuki (YS) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

[NOTE: Interview conducted in Japanese. Translation done by Miyuki Rickard.]

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Hayashida. Today is November 30, 1980, and we're at his home in Lower Paia, Maui.

YS: We've talked about the Nakayama Store and also about the liquor store. Today, can you tell us your story in detail from the time you became involved in pineapple cultivation in 1917?

MH: Let's see now . . . . At that time, the pineapple industry was very prosperous. Not only me, but all the [i.e., many] Japanese people, as soon as they had a little money, they invested in pineapple.

YS: Wasn't the prosperous time for the pineapple industry a little bit before that time?

MH: Pineapple prices always went up and down. So in 1917, 1918, it was a prosperous time. They worked at the plantation and saved a little money then . . . . Even those who owned stores got their hands into the pineapple business. Quickly all the Japanese people became involved during this prosperous time. That's why the price fell.

At that time, I had planned to return to Japan because I had saved some money. I wanted to go back at least once but thought it over and decided it wasn't the time to go back. So I also went into the pineapple business. A friend of mine had a [pineapple growing] business which he sold to me. With that I made a profit of \$2,000-\$3,000. At that time, \$2,000-\$3,000 was big money, right? (Laughs)

That was in 1918--1919 was when I sold it. I had bought it and tended to it and sold it at a profit of \$2,000-\$3,000. At that time, my father came from Japan.

YS: In 1919? When was that?

MH: I think it was in 1919. Then my two brothers--there are four brothers, but one of them couldn't come. I sent for my father to come here with the intention of sending for my two youngest brothers because at that time, one could call over parents and wives [to Hawaii], but not brothers and sisters. That was the American law at the time.

My intention for sending for my father was so that my younger brothers could come here, too. While I worked growing pineapples, I lived in a very small house. So my father said he didn't want to bring them to such a place. (Laughs)

YS: You mean your brothers?

MH: Yes. So he [MH's father] went back home [to Japan].

I told my father, "I'm doing what you should have to do. So let your two sons come here, and it'll be good for me and everybody else. It may not be much, but then I'll be able to give whatever our family owns to the younger brothers." But my father said no. (Laughs) I gave my father a little money when sending him home. So the two brothers both went into the army [in Japan]. (Laughs)

Because I had made a little money, another Japanese grower said why don't we work together. So the two of us became partners and cultivated a big piece of land. That time we sure worked hard. I was about thirty years old. The pineapple did grow, but with heavy rain, we had a hard time.

YS: Too much what?

MH: Rained so much, and just when the pineapple was ready, the price was down. We could only make two trips to the cannery . . . It was so far, and with the muddy roads--[we] worked so hard. (Laughs)

WN: How many people were growing pineapple?

MH: Altogether, I think about 400-500 Japanese people. From back there [Haiku] to here [Paia], there were about 400-500 people. None of them ever thought about price. (Laughs) The price was different every year. Even Dole was troubled [by this].

YS: Were the pineapple workers mostly Japanese?

MH: The growers were Japanese. They cultivated leased land because it was the cannery that owned all the land. If the cannery grew the pineapple themselves, one ton of [grade] number one and number two put together cost them fifty dollars. Their expenses [to grow] added to more than fifty dollars. But to the Japanese, they paid [only] twenty dollars, or eighteen dollars, or sixteen dollars. That's why the cannery gave advances to the Japanese growers. Everyone borrowed money from this cannery--Haiku Fruit Company.

YS: Was it because the cannery had the money, they could stabilize the price?

MH: The one to stabilize . . . . Every year the price was set in New York. So there was nothing we could do about that here.

That's right. Even Dole was in trouble. Dole--which was the Hawaiian Pineapple Company before--even he couldn't do anything. Later he gave up [dealing with private growers]. (Laughs) Dole--he was the Pineapple King, you know.

YS: This continued for three years, right? From 1917 to 1920 . . .

MH: My crop there didn't do very well. Pineapple did grow, but with high expense, I owed the cannery quite a lot of money. They [the cannery] wanted me to plant another big field. They told me to try again.

YS: Who?

MH: The cannery--Haiku Fruit Company--wanted me to try again, and they would lease me the land again. I told them all right and decided to try again. Then, again I farmed a big piece of land.

YS: How big was the land Haiku Fruit Company gave you?

MH: About 100 acres at that time. Before it was fifty acres--I ended up owing lots of money. (Laughs) So I farmed another 100 acres, and this time the pineapple grew very well. But at that time, there was a shortage of starter plants [slips]. You see, the [market] price had gone up again, so lots of people were growing it again. These starter plants used to come from Wahiawa on Oahu.

YS: From Wahiawa? You bought them from there?

MH: Yes. But those slips weren't good. They were damaged a lot. So we had to replant which was an additional big expense. But since I planted such a large plot, and the company had faith in me, I worked hard. And in the end, the pineapple grew very well. But the expenses were high. The expenses were very high prior to the harvesting. I harvested 2,000 tons.

YS: Two thousand tons from more than 100 acres?

MH: Harvested more than 2,000 tons. But at the time my pineapples were ready for harvest, the price went down again. It went down eight dollars per ton.

YS: It fell from fifteen dollars to eight dollars?

MH: From twenty-some dollars to . . . . I'm not sure but I think it went down sixteen to eighteen dollars. It went down eight dollars.



YS: A difference of eight dollars?

MH: Yes, a difference of eight dollars. You see, with 2,000 tons, that's \$1,600 [\$16,000]. (Laughs) That's big money. (Laughs) I always have bad luck. When pineapple is good, everybody plants it, and when the fruits are ready for harvest, the price drops down. So the price get shot. In America [at that time] they didn't know how to use pineapple except for canning. Now they make juice, all kinds of candy, and lots of other uses. But at that time, only . . .

YS: Where did you learn to grow pineapples?

MH: There's no special secret to growing it. Just plow and stick them [slips] in. But the slips were not very good, so they didn't grow well. The company had trusted me, so I worked hard to make the pineapple grow. Because the company trusted me, they put up all the money I needed. But the price went down again, and when that happens . . . . I had about 100 acres of slip seedlings which sold very well during prosperous times, but when times were bad, they didn't sell because nobody was growing them. In that way--well, maybe just my bad luck (laughs)--just the slips alone could make \$3,000-\$5,000.

YS: Is it easy to grow pineapples?

MH: Yes, it's easy. At that time, we were able to put paper [mulch] down for the first time. When we planted, the paper for one acre cost . . . . I don't remember for sure, but it was big money. The paper was quite a lot of expense. But in the end, my hard work paid off in good pineapples. But as I just told you, the price went down, and the slips didn't sell . . . . But there was over 100 acres, so I figured there would be quite a lot of number twos.

YS: What's number two?

MH: After the first crop is harvested, we harvest another crop the next year from the same plants without having to replant [i.e., ratoon crop]. The first crop takes eighteen months. The number two fruit is ready in one year. But because the plants produced so much fruit the first time, by the second time, most of the plants died. For a while it grew well, but as the fruits developed, it died. It didn't produce as I had estimated. Also, the price was low, so . . . . By this time, I owed the company a lot of money because they kept giving me more and more. But now the company said it looked hopeless, so why don't I quit. I told them all right.

YS: This is the Haiku Fruit Company?

MH: That's right. Everything was mortgaged, including each hoe. I had borrowed everything from the company to grow the pineapples. I had all the machinery, but even each hoe was mortgaged. But because the company trusted me, they didn't take anything [money] back--nothing at all. They gave me everything. Then I quit my own

pineapple business and went to work for the company because they asked me. I started drawing a salary. (Laughs)

YS: That's when you became the Haiku Fruit Company's foreman?

MH: That's right. I became the foreman. [MH became a foreman for the Haiku branch of Maui Agricultural Company, not the Haiku Fruit Company.]

YS: That was in 1925, right?

MH: About there, yes. From 1925 . . . . I started drawing a salary then.

YS: The company asked you to work for them because they had confidence in you even after your own pineapples had failed?

MH: That's right.

YS: [To back up a little], when you grew your own pineapple, did you do all the work yourself, or did you have people working for you?

MH: I couldn't do any of the actual work since it was a large place--sometimes twenty or so people . . .

YS: About twenty people?

MH: During the [peak] season, I had at least thirty people. I couldn't do any of the work since I had to run around.

YS: Supervising?

MH: Yes.

YS: Japanese?

MH: Mostly Japanese, some Filipinos. Yes, mostly Japanese.

YS: Can you tell us a little more about the reason or motive they had for making you the foreman?

MH: The reason was because I had quit my own pineapple business, and the company trusted me. It was better to be on salary. At that time, Haiku Fruit Company and the MA Company here--the Maui Agriculture Company--they were two separate companies then even though the financial fund was the same [Alexander & Baldwin]. The Maui Agriculture Company here [in Paia] started growing pineapples [in 1923] and opened up a branch there--in Haiku. At that time, Haiku Fruit called me to here . . .

YS: MA Company?

MH: MA Company called me to here, but I took the job with the MA Company. It was a different company then [from Haiku Fruit Company].

YS: To become a foreman?

MH: Yes.

YS: So you became a foreman for the Maui Agricultural Company, right? Not Haiku [Fruit Company]?

MH: That's right. Relationship with Haiku [Fruit Company] was cut off, and so I came here [MA Company].

YS: When you were growing pineapple . . .

MH: When I was farming [independently], it was for Haiku Fruit [Company]. I worked as a foreman for MA Company's Haiku branch. At that time, the head of the branch was a young Caucasian man who didn't know much, so I did most of the managing. We planted 1,000 to 2,000 acres. At that time, my salary was fairly good.

YS: About how much?

MH: (Laughs) At that time, I received about sixty-five dollars.

YS: Per month?

MH: Yes. At that time, sixty-five dollars was a good salary for a foreman. Generally, foremen only made about thirty or thirty-five dollars.

YS: What was the young Caucasian supervisor's name?

MH: I think it's best not to mention individuals' names. I think it's enough just to mention him as the company supervisor. He's well known throughout Hawaii. This company had all very trustworthy people.

He let me handle everything. Apparently this man never experienced hardship in his entire life, so he was not very conscientious about this work. Above him was another bigger boss. The number one supervisor did not like the idea that I was doing all the supervising here. But in between the two of us was [the supervisor below him], so he couldn't say anything.

YS: Where was the boss who didn't like that?

MH: Here in Maui. He didn't like a Japanese being supervisor.

YS: Why was it that he disliked that?

MH: Well, it was because he wanted to push authority.

YS: Were they afraid that some company secret might leak out?

MH: No, it wasn't anything like that. I think there was the feeling of not wanting to let Japanese people have supervisory authority.

YS: Can you tell us more about the work you did as a foreman?

MH: As a foreman, I supervised forty to fifty men per week--sometimes 200 people, if we were busy.

YS: What happened because the office boss didn't like a Japanese person to be supervising?

MH: Then, my manager--[whom] we just talked about--his wife passed away, so he went back to Kauai. [She] died from a ruptured appendix. When he left to go to Kauai, since the top boss didn't like me to supervise, he kicked me out. (Laughs) I was fired.

YS: In those times, you were fired without any severance pay?

MH: No, none. That's right. (Laughs)

YS: Did he give you a reason at the time he fired you?

MH: No, he didn't give me any. This boss was a very intelligent man, but he didn't care. He didn't care about expenses. He had all Korean foremen under him. I don't know if I can say this or not, but he was the house spokesman but was not part of the Baldwin family. He was very intelligent--the company's land was very good--but it lost money [under his management]. Those who were under him couldn't make any suggestions.

When I told him why don't we do it this way, he yells, (MH says in English: "Who's running this business?") (Chuckles) When I suggested my way, he said, (MH says in English: "Who's running this business? You or me?") He was that kind of a man. Every time I suggested something good, he said, (MH says in English: "Who's running the business, you or me?") (Laughs) Because he was like that, no one below him could make suggestions. He was that kind of a man.

But the one above me trusted me and said, (MH says in English: "You're right, you do what you want.") He was very different from the other man. My supervisor let me handle everything. There was a man like that, too.

YS: Were there any other Japanese who worked as foreman?

MH: There were no others--practically none. They were either Korean or Portuguese. There were many Korean foremen, but they were cheap, about thirty dollars or thirty-five dollars [salary per month]. That was the regular pay then. But there were no Japanese foremen in the big companies--only myself. (Chuckles)

YS: When you left, who became the foreman after you?

MH: It was a Portuguese.

YS: After you had grown pineapples on your own and then became a foreman, then you changed to other work, right? Looking back now, what are your feelings about your experiences of that time?

MH: At that time, there were 500 Japanese growers--at the same time I was a grower. I was the largest . . . . Only about 10 percent made a profit. Generally, everybody lost. It was because the pineapple price was so unstable.

At that time, there were no scientific studies on pineapples, so insect damage, and incidents of pineapple maturing and dying was very common. Around 1928 we had an insect problem. That time, there were few Japanese growers.

YS: Around that time [1928]?

MH: There were no Japanese growers at that time. Even the companies suffered then. They only grew them naturally without any scientific studies made. Later on as they developed chemicals to kill the insects, the pineapples grew better than before.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MH: As I look back on what I have done--I grew pineapple because I wanted to make money. Also, I was too hasty, I didn't research the fluctuating prices of pineapple enough. Also the weather--there were lots of reasons [for failure]. Wanting to make fast money was one of the faults of the Japanese people. The problems were also caused by not researching the market enough. This was a natural cause so it couldn't be helped, but it also rained too much and made the roads bad. This couldn't be helped, I feel. I felt I was just too hasty. Not enough market research--the prices were like this (gestures as if describing a roller coaster). It wasn't just me, all the Japanese had this tendency.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

YS: Why did you start the store [in 1932]?

MH: It was because working at the plantation didn't make much money. So I felt I wanted to get into some kind of business. Around that time, I didn't have much money, so I mortgaged my small house in Haiku and borrowed money from the bank to buy the store here at a good price.

YS: Whereabouts was it?

MH: Here in Lower Paia town.

YS: In town? Near the present Horiuchi Store?

MH: No, a little bit lower. You know where the [present] Nagata Store is?

YS: Nagata?

MH: You know the [present] Economy Store there? I was next to that. I bought a small store there. A fish market.

YS: Why did you start a fish market?

MH: There were three tuna boats in Maui. The company I became involved with owned two of them. The third one---there were two cooperatives. They brought in tuna every day--well, when the weather was bad, there were times when there was no fish.

Even during good weather, the tuna has seasons. It was so plentiful when it was in season. The fish had to be sold. The old-timers generally had the customers' orders in advance. But when the new fishermen came in, it was difficult for them to sell them all.

Every day, 5,000 to 8,000 pounds of fish were caught which all had to be sold. Sometimes, they couldn't sell them all. The fishermen had to catch as much as possible during the season because later on, [they know] there would be much less fish. But if they couldn't sell all they caught during the season, it was just too bad for them. So there was always friction between the fishermen and the dealers.

Fish are funny. When tuna was running, the fishermen would come back by 9 o'clock [a.m.] with a full load. By 9 o'clock in the morning--by 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock--they'd come back full. This is every day. When the tuna was running, aji [mackerel] was also being caught.

YS: What do you call aji in Hawaiian?

MH: Akule. They were running in Lahaina, and Kihei, and Hana. There was so much, there was hardly enough time to sell them all. Very little was sold at the market, so they [dealers] had to go out and try to sell them.

YS: Like a race?

MH: Yes, it was a race. (Laughs) They ran around like crazy. There was always friction between the fishermen and the dealers. The fishermen, whether there was a lot of fish or not, their livelihood depended on it. But the dealers said why should they take more than they can sell. (Chuckles)



Then the price would be cut down. But the lowered price didn't make any difference when it wasn't selling well--when the supply was too much. Then I started thinking--the amount of fish the fishermen could bring in was restricted. They certainly complained about that.

YS: How were they restricted?

MH: If they caught 8,000 [pounds] that day, they would be told to only catch 3,000 or 4,000 [in the future]. (Chuckles) Before, the fish they brought in would be divided into 300 or 500 pounds per person [dealer]. Now when it wasn't selling, each was allotted only 100 or 150 pounds. With only that much, even the dealers couldn't do much of a business. They didn't make any money because the fish price went down.

What they did with the leftover fish was a real relief. The Filipinos used it to make bagoong. It's an ingredient in Filipino cooking, like Ajinomoto. (Chuckles)

WN: Fish guts, huh?

MH: It's fish guts and meat ground up and put in a bottle, and left for about six months. You couldn't sell fresh ones.

YS: It must have had a peculiar odor?

MH: It's one-third salt. This was a profit because salt was cheap. To every 100 pounds of fish meat, they added 30 to 35 pounds of salt. Then it didn't stink anymore. Occasionally it had to be stirred.

YS: The fish started to sell well because the plantation workers . . .

MH: That was mostly it. There were few people outside [the plantation]. All plantation Filipinos. I didn't have a place to sell at first--everyone who sold had already predetermined customers. This one here, and that one there. They went around selling as if it was a battle. I had few customers--I certainly didn't know what to do. I drove around trying to sell all over the place. (Laughs)

The Filipinos all bought on credit. Before, people charged everything from dry goods to groceries. After the war the charge system was gone, but at that time, everything was bought on credit. I had the Japanese business in the beginning, but thinking I should also get the Filipino business, I treated them well.

There were about 300 to 500 Filipinos in a camp. I got confused as to who I gave credit to. (Laughs) They were all young men between seventeen or eighteen to twenty years old, some twenty-four or twenty-five years old. When I sold to them, I'd write their names and house number and plantation number, but I'd be confused when I went to make the collection. (Laughs) I felt like a fool--didn't know who I had sold to. (Laughs)



Then when there was no fish [to sell], I went to the Filipino camp just to visit with them. Without knowing anything [of their language], I'd talk to them, play with them and soon got to know who was who. Then the collection became easier. If I let them have too much credit, they wouldn't pay. Also I had to give credit to such large numbers of people--100, 200 people.

On their payday, I went to make collections. The fish [may have been] in, but instead of going to get them, I had to go do collections. (Laughs) Once you become close, like a net, when they passed by I could call them by name. As I recognized their faces, they all came to pay. If I didn't recognize their faces, they didn't pay. They pretended to not know what I was talking about.

When I asked them, "Are you so-and-so?," they say no. (Chuckles) I couldn't do anything about it. In that way, collection was so difficult. Once I knew their faces, and we became friends, collection became easy. They would come to me to pay. That's why I had to get close to them.

YS: This is going back a little, but can you tell us more about the reason you started a fish market.

MH: The reason was as I said before . . .

YS: You had quit the plantation, right?

MH: Yes, I had quit. There was a job at the plantation, but the salary was low, and the work was hard. That's why I wanted to start a business, even if it was a vegetable store. The former owner couldn't continue it any longer and asked me to buy it, so I bought the store.

YS: The fish market?

MH: Yes, the fish market.

YS: About how much was the starting capital?

MH: The capital was---I had bought several shares in the boats before they were built.

YS: In the two fishing boats?

MH: Yes.

YS: Who owned the boats?

MH: The fish dealer's cooperative built a boat and started a fish market. There was one [representing] Lahaina, Wailuku, Kahului, Paia, and Haiku. Twenty dealers made up the cooperative and together they built a boat.

YS: Only the cooperative members got to have the fish caught by the boats which the cooperative had built?

MH: That's right. It wasn't sold to the outside.

YS: How big were the boats?

MH: It was big for that time. I think it was about 100 horsepower. One was smaller, but . . .

YS: With that, 5,000 or 8,000 pounds [of fish] were caught?

MH: That's right. Sometimes they would bring in 10,000 pounds.

YS: About how many dealers did they have?

MH: I think about twenty-five. Something like that.

YS: In Paia?

MH: No, in all of Maui.

YS: How many fish dealers were there in Paia?

MH: I think there were four in Paia. I think four dealers. Kahului also had four. Wailuku had four or five. Lahaina had three or four. They were also in Makawao and Haiku. Here and there, I'm not sure, but about twenty-five.

YS: When you decided to start your fish store in Paia, the other dealers must have regarded you as another competition.

MH: That's right. There was competition (laughs). It was said that among the fish dealers, there were few people with kindly hearts. The competition is so tough that people step on each other.

YS: The four in Paia, and twenty-five in all, were they fish stores? Or fish . . .

MH: Naturally they are fish stores.

YS: They had shops?

MH: Yes. The dealers were responsible for all that was caught. They had the responsibility to take it all. Because the fishermen were employees--although there were some fishermen who had a share in the boat--but most of the crew were employees. The catch was divided accordingly among the dealers.

YS: Were there several cooperatives that built boats?

MH: There were two boats.

YS: Two boats. Your group . . .

MH: One was Showa Maru. The other was Maui Maru and Nippon Maru--we had two.

YS: In your group?

MH: Yes.

YS: Were there many other . . .

MH: There were other dealers.

YS: There were other cooperatives?

MH: Yes. That's right. There was competition there among the groups, too.

YS: Weren't there others? Other cooperatives?

MH: There were two. The Maui Maru and Nippon Maru group, and the Showa Maru group.

YS: Which were you in?

MH: I was part of the Maui Maru [and Nippon Maru] group.

YS: In your group there were twenty-five individuals [dealers]?

MH: I'm not sure, but I think there were about that many. There were two in Haiku, two in Makawao; in Paia, five more. There were also those who sold in the camps. Kahului, Lahaina, Wailuku, so there must have been twenty-five or twenty-six people. All the fish caught was divided among the members. One share here, one there.

YS: It was divided up according to shares?

MH: That's right.

YS: How many shares did you have?

MH: I had one share. But with two boats, I got two shares.

YS: How much fish you got for one share depended on the day then?

MH: That's right. There were times when the Maui Maru came back early with a good catch, while the other boat got lost and came back late. It was something other people couldn't imagine. Some boats came back at night, while others came back at 10 o'clock in the morning or at noon with a full load. (Chuckles)

YS: Were there those who had more than one share in a single boat?

MH: It was one share per person. The reason being, people had put up money for the boat to be built. There were some people who had half shares. If each share was \$300, those who only paid \$150 would get half a share.

YS: So one share was \$300?

MH: I think at that time it was about that much. Two hundred fifty dollars, \$300 . . . . I'm not sure because I wasn't there at the time the boat was built. I bought into it afterwards. I'm told it cost about that.

YS: Did you pay for your share all at one time or did you have to pay monthly?

MH: I don't think we paid it all at once. I don't remember the details, but maybe it was in two or three payments. I came in afterwards.

YS: Was that \$300 per year?

MH: No, no, because that was only for building the boat. We didn't have to pay after that.

YS: You had to pay for the fish caught, right?

MH: We had to pay for the fish every month.

YS: As it was caught, right?

MH: That's right. That was a problem. Sometimes if the weather was bad, there would be no fish. But when the weather was good, they'd come back so early every day with a big load of fish. When that happened, there was too much, and they didn't sell. Then there were fights between the fishermen and the brokers when they started restricting the catch because the supply was too plentiful for them all to sell well.

YS: So there were brokers?

MH: The brokers were the cooperative's fish dealers. They were the ones who put on the catch restrictions because they couldn't sell it all. (Chuckles) If the fishermen brought in 5,000 pounds, they would tell them to only bring in 3,000 pounds. It was always a fight between the two. The fishermen said they had to catch as much as possible when it was good because there were other times when conditions were bad and they couldn't catch anything.

YS: You couldn't get any fish if you didn't join the cooperative, right?

MH: That's right. If you didn't join the cooperative, they wouldn't let you have any fish. The fishermen wanted to catch as much as

possible when they could. The dealers said there had to be a restriction on the amount of catch because they couldn't sell it all. (Laughs) Then the price would drop.

YS: When you started the fish market, did you run the store alone?

MH: That's right. Just with my wife--the two of us. Occasionally my daughters helped out.

YS: Every morning you went down to the harbor to wait for the boats to come in, then brought the fish back?

MH: That's right.

YS: You sold at the store and also delivered to the plantation?

MH: That's right.

YS: You did all that without any outside help?

MH: That's right. I was like a crazy man. (Laughs) Then the price would go down, and the catch would be restricted . . . . If they caught 5,000 [pounds], they would be told to catch only 3,000 [pounds]. The 5,000 [pounds] wouldn't sell, so they were told to catch only 3,000 pounds. So there was always friction between the fishermen and the dealers.

Then I brought this person Okumura from Kona and started a canning company. We turned whatever extras the fishermen caught into canned goods. The canning business was very difficult in the beginning. We were able to make very high quality canned goods--we continued it up until the start of the war.

YS: Was that in Honolulu?

MH: No, here.

YS: Haiku?

MH: We did it in Haiku.

YS: Who was it that you started the cannery with again?

MH: I helped out a lot, but Okumura did most of it with his own capital.

YS: [His name was] Okumura what?

MH: Kazuyuki. Before that, he had a coffee factory in Hawaii (Big Island). This Okumura . . .

YS: How old [was he then]?

MH: He was---let's see, nineteen . . . . I'm not sure. Beyond Honokaa,

there's a place called Paaui--there's a coffee mill there. That area is homestead land, and all the Japanese people on the homestead grew coffee for the coffee mill. When [the owner] quit and left, Okumura took over the coffee mill. But it didn't do as well as he wanted it to. He was a man who took risky chances. I had gotten to know him, so I asked him to come here to start the tuna cannery.

YS: When was it that you started the tuna factory?

MH: Let's see now, nineteen . . . . I think it was around 1935, 1937.

YS: Then it was right after you bought the store?

MH: Yes, soon after that. I think it was about that time, but I'm not sure. There was a lot of friction between the fishermen and the dealers. So if there was a tuna factory to can the surplus, both sides would benefit, right? Naturally, there was a price difference between the dealers and the cannery because even if they [fishermen] caught 1,000 or 10,000 pounds, we only got the surplus. So the price was different. In Honolulu, the cannery took the fish before the dealers [did], but here, we got the leftovers after the dealers took what they wanted. So there was a big price difference. Both the dealers and the fishermen were happy.

I took ice down to the fishermen and asked them to pack the fish in ice. Also I told them to announce over the radio when the boat returned and with how much of a catch. (Laughs) I made them announce it on the radio.

YS: Were there radio telephones at that time?

MH: No, we didn't have those things yet. That wasn't much of a success, but like that, I tried some unusual things then. None of the dealers were that smart. (Laughs) They were only concerned about their own selves.

YS: It must have been difficult just to open up the store in Paia . . . . There wasn't any ice, right?

MH: I bought ice according to the amount of fish from there. I was the first one in Maui to make a cold storage.

YS: How did you make that?

MH: I contracted Von Hamm Young to make the cold storage. Now I didn't have to buy ice anymore. Now I didn't need ice.

YS: Was it an electric cold storage?

MH: Yes, electric. Naturally it was electric. It was like what everybody has now. I renovated to several different conveniences. The Filipino [business] helped me to prosper. But then the war started . . .

YS: When you went to sell at the plantation, you had to keep your fish chilled, right? How did you go and sell the fish?

MH: (Laughs) It was really haphazard because I was like a crazy man.

YS: For instance, did you drive a car or ride a bicycle, or did you walk?

MH: No, I used a truck. So if it didn't sell well, I'd run around . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 7-21-2-79 TR; SIDE ONE

YS: Did you sell anything else [on your truck]?

MH: Because this was a fish market, I only sold fish.

YS: It must have been difficult to keep the fish fresh in the truck.

MH: Yes, that's right. Sometimes I packed it with ice. Also, the Board of Health wouldn't let me cut the fish outside the truck.

YS: So in the back of the truck [the fish was loaded]?

MH: Naturally there was a top [on the truck]. I had a top, and it was screened so that flies wouldn't get in.

YS: Then you put ice in it?

MH: Yes. It was very difficult. (Laughs) Then I made as many improvements as possible. I served as the cooperative president for several years. I became the president from my second or third year with the cooperative. I made as many reforms as I could during that time. But when the war started, all the boats were stopped from going out. They couldn't go out--particularly the Japanese.

YS: How long were you peddling?

MH: From 1932 to when the war started in 1941.

YS: Did you start early in the morning?

MH: Yes, it was early. (MH says with emphasis.)

YS: About what time?

MH: Six or 7 [o'clock] in the morning, I'd be in the store . . . .  
Until evening time.

YS: In order to start selling fish at 6 or 7 in the morning, didn't



you have to go get it much earlier?

MH: The fish came in [on the boat] around 9 or 10 o'clock [a.m.]--sometimes around noon. So I had to go get it then. There was no set time. I went whenever the fishing boats came back. Then I would go out to sell. The day would be the same. Depending on when the fish came in, I went sometimes in the early morning, sometimes at night.

YS: What time did the boat generally come in?

MH: Generally when it was in season, it would come back about 9 or 10 o'clock [a.m.].

YS: Then you picked up the fish and went to peddle them right away?

MH: That's right. If all of a sudden the aji came in, I'd have to go pick that up, too. [I went to] Kihei, sometimes Lahaina. Other times, Paia.

YS: How did they communicate to you [about where to go]?

MH: It was all by telephone. I had hired a bookkeeper who phoned me. The fish dealer manager contacted everyone to pick up. It was a hardship for everyone.

YS: While you were out selling at the plantation, who watched the store?

MH: Mama [MH's wife] did that. [She was] almost the boss (laughs).

YS: You sold only fish?

MH: I also had a small grocery.

YS: For example, what kind of things?

MH: I say "groceries," but it had only few things. Some canned goods and a few other items.

YS: Where did you get the canned goods?

MH: There was a large wholesale store called the Kahului [HC&S] Store. I also bought from Japanese stores in Honolulu--Hata Store, Yamamoto, and . . . . There were so many who came [to Maui to sell].

YS: When you bought the fish at the harbor, did you pay cash right away?

MH: No, that was once a month.

YS: It was on credit?

MH: That's right.

YS: Your customers who came to the store were from Paia?

MH: They came from all over this area. Mostly Filipinos because the majority of them were Filipino.

YS: Japanese and Filipinos. The Filipinos [came] because you were good to them. (MH laughs) Among the fish you sold, there was akule and tuna?

MH: Yes, akule and tuna. In addition to that . . .

YS: Ahi?

MH: Yes, ahi, too. Also, when there was no fish here, I bought from Otani in Honolulu. There were times when I bought every week from Otani in Aala Market.

YS: Where was the Otani Market?

MH: Otani was in Aala Market in Honolulu.

YS: The boat came here?

MH: No, he contracted (tape garbled). He had all kinds of fish. So I ordered whatever kind of fish I needed, and they sent it twice a week to here. It was fine when there was fish, but there were times when there was none. When the fish supply is cut, my store could prosper. That was a very important point. During the winter when supply was low, often I bought from there [Otani] in order to open my store. Business was good because nowhere else had fish. (Laughs)

YS: You had an exclusive arrangement with the Otani Market?

MH: Something like that.

YS: Did the other members of the cooperative resent your arrangement with Otani Market?

MH: There were others who bought fish from Honolulu. But many of them just played cards or gambled [during the slow season]. (Laughs) That's right. I didn't do that or even take a drink. (Laughs) I've never even bet a nickel in my life. (Laughs)

It was most important to not run out of fish in your store. That way, the customer continued to come.

YS: What did the other stores do? They just gambled?

MH: (Laughs) That's why very few fish store owners made a lot of money.

YS: If you sold fish your way, you'd make money.

MH: (Laughs) Yes, that's right.

YS: Did you make a lot of money?

MH: (Laughs) I was fortunate to make money. When the war started, [because the boats couldn't go out], I contacted a big Hawaiian man to make a [fish] trap. A net. I lay the net, and the next morning around 9 or 10 o'clock, pulled it in. This way I was able to catch lots of beautiful smaller fish which were afraid to swim to the open ocean. I also speared tako. So I had a net full of small fish and also the tako--it was so heavy.

He was a bad fellow who tricked others by promising them fish if they would lend him money. (Chuckles) But he didn't trick me because I always said that people have to be honest. (Laughs)

YS: Did he lay the net for you?

MH: He made wire nets. They were wire nets which we buried in the ocean--about thirty in all.

YS: The fish swim into that?

MH: Yes, they came [into the net]. Every day I brought the nets up. Good fish were caught in it--smaller fish such as kumu. Nowadays it's no longer used, huh?

During that time, tako was so plentiful. Every day I'd have a big catch. (Laughs)

YS: The tako was caught in the net, too?

MH: No, by spear.

YS: Who did? The Hawaiian?

MH: Yes. Every day he speared 100 or 150 pounds. I made a lot of money at that time. The other fish stores were afraid to contact this man because he was a bad one. (Laughs) But he never did anything bad to me. (Laughs).

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 7-26-3-80 TR

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Hayashida (MH)

January 26, 1980

Lower Paia, Maui

BY: Yukihsa Suzuki (YS) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

[NOTE: Interview conducted in Japanese. Translation done by Scott Lehman.]

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Minoru Hayashida. Today is January 26, 1980, and we're at his home in Lower Paia, Maui.

YS: So, in 1932 you started the fish market . . .

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right.

YS: At that time, how did you go about raising the necessary capital?

MH: Capital? You really didn't need that much.

YS: [About] how much?

MH: Oh, well--if you had about a thousand dollars it was enough, I guess. At that time, I had gone broke in the pineapple business. So then, doing work for a [pineapple] company [in Haiku], I had been able to pay off some old debts and finally come over here [Paia]. I really didn't need much capital, uh, I didn't have much capital. I just worked hard (laughs).

YS: But this one thousand dollar capital, did you borrow it from a bank?

MH: Well, I had some money myself. Then I mortgaged the small house I had at the bank.

YS: Where was that?

MH: In Haiku.

YS: Did you sell the house in Haiku?

MH: Yeah, I sold it. After that, I sold it.

YS: So at first you mortgaged it, used it as collateral to borrow money from the bank?

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right.

YS: When did you sell the house in Haiku?

MH: I sold it in about 1935 or 1936, I guess. I can't recall exactly.

YS: At the time, how much did a house sell for?

MH: It was very cheap--only [a] small house, just a place I had built myself because I had no place to live. Uh--house and land together were--they were cheap. I'm not sure, exactly. And the person who bought it didn't have any money. (Laughs) At that time it was really a depression. Say about \$700 or \$800, maybe \$1,000 [for the house].

YS: So you sold it?

MH: Yes, and I made it monthly payments because the person who bought it had no money.

YS: But at first you just mortgaged the house to borrow money and used that and your savings to start the fish market?

MH: Well, yes.

YS: Was the store [building] already there?

MH: The store? Well, here in Maui there was the fish company. They sold shares and built the boats. There were about twenty-five shareholders altogether, from around Maui. Lahaina, Wailuku, Kahului, Paia. The ones who put out money for the shares had rights--shareholders' rights. The fishermen had shares too--sort of like a fishing company. And when the fishermen would bring the fish in, the ones [merchants] who had shares got the fish first. They had the right to sell them because they had put up the money.

YS: So you got your fish through this fishing cooperative and sold them?

MH: That's right.

YS: But you had your own store?

MH: Right.

YS: Was the store already there? Didn't you buy it from someone else?

MH: Yes, that's right. The owner said the economy was bad and asked me if I wouldn't like to buy the store.

YS: Who was it? Do you remember his name?

MH: Uh--maybe it's better if I don't say. He's passed away now, though. He had three or four stores around here. I bought one of those and took it over.

YS: So you bought it outright, rather than leasing it?

MH: Oh, no. No, it was a lease. I bought shares [in the fishing co-op]. The shop was rented. That's right. In those days Japanese didn't have much financial power. There weren't many people who owned their own house or shop.

YS: So did you lease from the former owner?

MH: No, it was someone else. The landlord was someone else. He had made the store and I took it over.

YS: How big was the store?

MH: How big? Well, in back it was---the front was---well, it was small. (Gestures at room.) Maybe a little bigger than here . . . . Sixteen or eighteen feet wide.

YS: How long?

MH: Length? Oh, about the same, I'd say. In the shop there was an ice-box. So maybe it was twenty feet [long] or so. Then in back there were living quarters.

YS: Where you lived?

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right. Two rooms. And the rent at that time was cheap, very cheap . . . . Not lease money. Just regular, uh . . . .

YS: Rent?

MH: Yes, that's right.

YS: But even after you rented the store, didn't you have to buy some things?

MH: Yes, that's right. This was still in the days of iceboxes--you had to put ice inside to chill the fish. Because that was a lot of trouble, I was the first one, probably the first one on Maui, to put in cold storage--an electric showcase. I was the first one to put one in. (Laughs) But since I was the youngest, and had the newest store, not many people knew about it and I had a hard time. Here at the store I hardly sold anything back then. Mostly I had to peddle them on the outside. But with peddling, you never know if people are going to buy. It was a hard time.

YS: So how did the amount you sold peddling compare with what you sold in the store?

MH: Oh, it was almost all outside [peddling].

YS: Out of ten, eight or nine would be . . .

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right. Ninety percent was outside. At the shop, the economy--the income--was very small. And there wasn't much of a [profit] margin. There were lots of Japanese in the camps then, but like anywhere [else], they would stay with their regular shop and buy from the people they knew. It was hard to break in among us Japanese. So I went to the Filipinos. When I'd go to the Filipinos--because there were a lot of them then . . .

YS: You told us a little about that time during our last conversation. Today I wanted to ask about some of the hardships involved in starting the fish market. This was the first time you had ever sold fish, wasn't it?

MH: It was.

YS: You'd grown pineapples and such before, but starting a new type of work like that, you must have had to work hard. Figuring out how to effectively take the fish and . . .

MH: (Laughs) Well, if you work hard, then something will come of it. (Pause) There's a different way of doing things in the country--in Maui--than in Honolulu.

YS: In what way?

MH: Well, after all, Honolulu is the capital of Hawaii and for many types of business there is a different way of doing things. Maui has Maui's own unique (laughs) commercial laws.

YS: Such as?

MH: Such as--even if your shop is small you go outside to sell as much as 90 percent. And almost every day the boats would go and catch bonito--big bonito. In season lots of boats would be in loaded with fish by 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning. Then we had to hurry over and pick them up. This was the old--the old way and looking back on it--it wasn't at all efficient. But the Japanese who had been in fishing for a long time didn't want to change. Some of us said there should be improvements made--like taking ice out on the boats. When they'd catch bonito they would just put them in a crate and bring them in like that. Sometimes, if the fish get in fast it's okay, but if they're a little late, the fish are half no good already. Methods like that. Or equipping the boats with radios . . .

YS: Radios?

MH: Radios. So they could call us and tell us how much they had caught, and we could receive it. Or report what time they were coming back to port, or that they would be late because the fishing was bad.



When there are reports like that it is much more convenient for us who have to come from a long way off. I tried to get improvements made by telling people that methods like this ought to be used, but it was quite hard to get either the co-op or the men on the boats [i.e., fishermen] to agree. I had a good friend in Kona though--a man named Okumura--and I talked to him and we started a cannery.

YS: We'd like to hear more about that, but if we could just back up for a minute to the time when you started your store. To open your fish market did you need a special permit?

MH: Well, yes--but it was very cheap back then. Anybody could do it . . . . As long as they had a business license.

YS: And where did you get the business license?

MH: Oh, well, that was from Maui county (tape garbled), but it wasn't especially hard to get. It was quite cheap.

YS: But handling foodstuffs like fish, wasn't there some clearance from the Board of Health or . . .

MH: Well, yes. There was some of that. If your hands--if they had some sickness or if there was any other sickness, then they were strict. But this was in the old days and it was quite cheap.

YS: So about how much fish did you sell in one day?

MH: Well, let me see. There wasn't any set figure, really. The fishermen had to catch fish but the higher-ups in Maui said you shouldn't catch anything you can't sell. There was often trouble over that. In season they used to catch so many fish--maybe not nowadays but they wouldn't all be bonito. They would catch mackerel too. They'd bring them from Hana. And in Kihei, and in Lahaina they'd be catching fish--they'd all be catching plenty and hardly any selling. We'd pack the iceboxes full, but there would always be gripes, because the seller's methods were generally the opposite of what the fishermen wanted.

YS: As for how much you sold in one day. . . . On the average . . .

MH: Average? (Chuckles) Very little, in those days.

YS: When you say "very little" . . . .

MH: Well, sometimes you could even sell a hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds. But when there are fish being caught, coming in every day, then sales would be small, because everyone would already have some. Maui's population was generally fixed, you see. At first, when fish are scarce, they sell. Like with vegetables, it's the same thing. Because the area that you sell to is small--it's fixed . . . .

YS: When you sold fish, how would you determine the price?

MH: The price? Well, if the original cost was five cents, you might sell it for ten, eh? Or, when fish are scarce they'll sell, but when we were choked with fish--when they were catching them every day--we'd have to sell for maybe eight cents.

YS: So you weren't told how much you had to sell the fish for . . . . By the co-op or . . .

MH: No, none of that. It was up to us.

YS: So each dealer could set his own price individually?

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right.

YS: How did your price compare with some of the other stores?

MH: (Laughs) Well, mostly I just went along with the others.

YS: How would you find out [what the others were charging]?

MH: Well, you could generally guess. It wasn't set. And all the old-timers had established customers so it was quite a hard time for someone new--someone like me--to break into that. You just had to find some way to do it. Like by pushing yourself and working hard when others are taking a holiday. Or selling to the Filipinos. In those days there were lots of young Filipinos and because everything was charged it was hard to collect if you gave them too much credit.

YS: In selling the fish did you keep any type of record? How much fish came in each day and how much you sold--some sort of bookkeeping?

MH: No. For each share---if they got 4,000 pounds of fish and there were twenty shares, then each shareholder would get 200 pounds. In that way, there was an allotment given for each share.

YS: So you didn't especially keep track in your store of how many pounds came in and how much you sold?

MH: No, none of that. Just my allotment according to the shares. Selling it was your business.

YS: So you just sold what came in and didn't keep any records?

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right.

YS: During our previous talk, it struck me as interesting--what you mentioned about Otani Store in Honolulu--that you had them send fish to you over here.

MH: Yes. Otani Store would---when there are a lot of fish, you can

catch a lot of fish. But if there's not a single boat [that comes in] then there's none. Especially in Maui, where there were regularly only three or four boats. Sometimes there would be no boats at all. Then I would send to Otani for so many pounds of such-and-such a fish.

Even though they say they're running a fish market---some people [fish market owners on Maui] would work hard every day, but some wouldn't work very much. Lots of them would work when their allotment came in, but they wouldn't send away to Honolulu to get fish to sell [when their allotments ran out]. People like that are just fooling around! (Laughs)

YS: Was Otani's a fairly large-scale operation?

MH: Otani--that was the Otani that was in the Aala Market. They were something. They were the biggest in Honolulu.

YS: When you had fish sent over from Otani's it took time, didn't it?

MH: One night. They would send them in the evening, as soon as they got my letter. [The fish] would get here the next morning.

YS: Your letter?

MH: I would send them a letter with my order.

YS: But what about the telephone?

MH: Eh? Well, the telephone costs money, doesn't it? (Laughs)

YS: You said letters?

MH: It was always letters. The letter would say how much of what kind of fish and it would come on the next morning's boat . . . . Because it [the boat] came twice a week. Then I had my chance to break into sales areas. While other people played [took a holiday], I could take the fish Otani sent me and try and sell them. It was a chance to break into the market.

YS: How did you first make contact with Otani Store and get this sort of special connection established?

MH: No. [It wasn't like that.] They were a big store. You could just send a letter and they would send any amount of fish. Big tuna or small fish--so much of such-and-such a fish--if you asked them to send it.

YS: Weren't there others who began to imitate what you did?

MH: (Laughing) Yes. Yes, that's right. There were some. There were a lot who didn't. The new ones, people like me, had to expand their

sales methods--their sales area. So I stayed in frequent touch with Otani and thereby got a chance to break into some sales areas.

YS: When you bought through Otani then, the price of the fish was a little higher, wasn't it?

MH: Oh, yes. Of course. Otani got its share every morning too. Because there's a lot of boats in Honolulu. Otani would get its share and send some over here right away. I don't know how much of a [profit] margin Otani had, but even after they [the fish] got to Maui they didn't cost that much. They [Otanis] were very honest people.

YS: But the price was little higher--a little higher than in Maui.

MH: Yes. A little higher. But it made sales methods much easier.

YS: When you had Otani send fish, did the co-op or any of the members say anything about your having created a special route?

MH: No. No complaints. That was one's own affair. But you couldn't do anything unfair with the fish caught in Maui. That's right. If I got extra fish or someone else got less--that couldn't be done. For each share--so much fish. That was the way it was done. But how much I brought over from Otanis --that was up to me.

YS: So you got all kinds of fish from Otanis?

MH: Big tuna, they had. And small fish. If you said send such-and-such a fish, they would send it.

YS: You said before [previous conversation] that the Japanese weren't allowed to go to sea [during World War II].

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right.

YS: So what became of the fish business during the war?

MH: During the war the fish business was my big opportunity. This Hawaiian -- the Hawaiians could go out to sea.

YS: Offshore?

MH: Yes. Offshore. And I made baskets--by baskets I mean what you call traps. I made traps and put them in the ocean. Then I'd get the fish in the traps--small fish, but all good. This one Hawaiian would spear octopus.

YS: How much would you pay the Hawaiian?

MH: [It depended on the] quantity of fish. But it was cheap. At that time, octopus was about ten cents a pound, I think. Sometimes maybe

twelve cents. If it was too high--fish was about thirty cents--thirty or thirty-five cents a pound. As soon as I got it--because none of the other fish markets had any fish--people would come saying, "Oh, let me have it. Please let me have it." And I'd sell it.

YS: So did you sell the fish the Hawaiian caught to other fish markets?

MH: No. I sold retail, at the store. Others couldn't because it was my capital.

YS: What happened to the other fish sellers? The other Japanese fish sellers?

MH: The Japanese fish sellers? Well, they did all sorts of things. Like getting in touch with fishermen themselves. But mostly with this [the war] the fish markets were wiped out. It changed. Lots of people quit because they couldn't make it anymore. Nearly all quit. There wasn't much of a life for fish sellers. They quit . . . . Because there were no fish.

YS: So that means that compared to before the war, your profits from the fish business went way down? Or were they high?

MH: It was very profitable.

YS: Profits were high?

MH: Yes.

YS: Because of the Hawaiians?

MH: Yes.

YS: During the war?

MH: At that time there weren't many fish, you see. Whatever you bought you could sell, so the margin was a little better. And from the navy yard--there was a navy yard there--and we [Japanese] couldn't go in there. But when the navy men had a day off the haole boys would come to get fish and such. And this Hawaiian was big. He was hapa actually--but he was really a big guy and he had guts, so he'd go in there [the navy yard]. [We'd] get lots of fish. And there's these little ones [fish], called nehu. Nehu, it's small--aku bait, no? . . . . Anyway there's these ones called nehu and they'd come until the water was just black with them. So I made a net and would lay it. You really couldn't sell them though. It [business] was very slow. But because it was wartime, (laughs) . . . . Anything we could get was good--food production, eh?

YS: What happened with Otani Store during the war?

MH: No. I didn't have any more contact with Otani's.

YS: During the war . . .

MH: No more . . .

YS: Otani too, because he was Japanese, couldn't get any fish in?

MH: Yes. Well, he probably got some in, but it was the same in Honolulu, right? Hardly any fish. They wouldn't have enough to be sending any to Maui, anyway. But Otani's was a big business. Even shrimp--Otani imported direct from Texas. A big load--tens of tons--kept it in a big cold storage. After that, we got our shrimp from him.

YS: You got some from him during the war, too?

MH: No. Not during the war. During the war the army and navy would take everything, eh? After that, I don't think I had any more contact with Otani, because I quit [the fish business].

YS: Even though Japanese couldn't go out fishing [in boats] during the war, other people went, didn't they?

MH: Other people?

YS: For example, Hawaiians or haoles or Portuguese--couldn't they go fishing?

MH: No, they hardly got into fishing. It was nearly all Japanese . . . . Yes. It was.

YS: So during the war you actually prospered?

MH: Well, yes. So long as I had fish. Sales were no problem. As long as you had something, it would sell. I was able, more or less, to make money. Nobody else had any fish, right?

Trap fish, octopus, little nehu. I sold all kinds of things.

WN: But it still wasn't more than what the fishing boat brought in, though.

MH: The army had taken all the boats.

YS: But compared to before the war, wasn't there a smaller quantity of fish sold?

MH: Less volume, yes.

YS: Volume was small, but profit margin was bigger.

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right. That was just for a time, though. It didn't last long.



YS: This is a little off the subject, but during the war, weren't there a lot of soldiers here, in Paia or maybe Puunene?

MH: Yes, many. Camp Maui. Forty thousand. There were two marine what-do-you-call-its there.

YS: Did you sell fish to those people?

MH: They didn't eat fish. Mainlanders really can't eat much fish.

YS: Was fish all you sold during the war? Or was there something . . .

MH: Well, a few groceries and such . . . . Hardly any, really. And then I quit in 1947. Because I quit two or three years [after the war ended] I thought I probably wouldn't make it, so I quit around 1947.

YS: So during the war you just sold fish and few groceries?

MH: That's right. And then I quit around 1947. Since then [I haven't been in] business. After that, I built this house, [grew] some of this and that, or went to Kula. (Laughs)

YS: After the war didn't the [Japanese] fishermen start going out again?

MH: No. They didn't--they had quit completely.

YS: Why was that?

MH: Business methods had changed by then--before the war to after the war. There was no [fish] trade at all--nobody went out [fishing]. The methods before and after the war were entirely different. Before the war--even if you went outside [peddling], everything was charged. After the war everything became cash, so business methods changed completely. (Pause) Because of the war, nearly all the fish markets had closed. Even in Wailuku there were only one or two left. In Lahaina some people who had their own small boats might have sold some, but even in Kahului, there weren't any fish sellers to speak of.

YS: So who has been doing the fishing--the fishing industry--since the war?

MH: Well, the fishermen were almost all Japanese, you see.

YS: Before the war? What about after the war?

MH: Everybody disbanded [quit]. The army had taken the boats, so everybody quit. The fishermen all got different work. Everybody quit.

YS: But there was some fishing after the war? For example, even now . . .

MH: After the war? No, none. Even in small, five or ten horsepower



boats it was almost all Japanese who went fishing--deep sea fishing, no? But then [after the war], there wasn't a single one that was Japanese. There wasn't a single one who went fishing with a boat--before the war, yes. But after, there wasn't a single one. Even now, there are some tuna boats, but they're doing it with some other capital. There's hardly any Japanese-owned boats now.

YS: So in 1947, two years after the war ended, you quit the fish business, is that right?

MH: Yes. Yes, nearly all quit.

YS: And you quit too? You were fifty [years old], weren't you? You retired at fifty?

MH: Uh--fifty--no, sixty . . . . Because I'm ninety now. (Chuckles)  
[MH was fifty-seven when he retired from the fish business.]

YS: So who has been doing the fishing since the war?

MH: Now some others have put up the capital and in Maui the big fishing boats--the people who catch bonito--there's two boats. Then there's other small--what you call sampan--but there's hardly any Japanese who do that. No Japanese fishermen, hardly. No fishermen. Well, maybe a few. I don't really know the details. It may be that the boats that go out for fun--Portuguese and haoles and others go out and fish for fun. And that's what you buy. Even now, the people who sell fish just get in touch with those people and do business that way. But I really don't know much about that side of it. There's a lot of fish, though. But there don't seem to be any Japanese who specialize in fishing. And the young nisei and sansei aren't enthusiastic enough to make a business of it, even if they do go fishing. In the old days it was Japanese who did it. And the boats are different, too--compared with the boats back then. Now they go out in fine boats for fun and run all over everywhere and catch fish. It's a form of recreation, really. But it's this kind of boat that fish sellers now get in contact with to do business, I think.

YS: What have you been doing since 1947?

MH: Well . . . . When I was in business, there was no social security. Not for merchants. So I figured I should try and get social security. So I started a chicken company.

YS: Chicken company?

MH: Yes. There used to be a chicken company here [Paia]--up above the road there.

YS: About how many chickens?

MH: Oh--maybe 400 or 500.

YS: From what year to what year was that?

MH: About ten years . . .

YS: From 1947?

MH: Maybe less than ten years, but chicken . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

MH: Earlier it hadn't been covered by social security. It [the chicken business] wasn't covered for quite a while. And I thought, what a problem (chuckles). Because it would be easier if I could get some money--some fixed income. And even when they gave coverage, agricultural workers were the very last to get it. After that, I did it [raised chickens] for about two years. After two years, I went to the [social security] office and they checked and told me I was covered. Because [I had] paid taxes they said I was covered. So then, I quit. As soon as I was covered [by social security] I quit [the poultry business] (laughs).

YS: So you've really done all kinds of work, haven't you? From sugar-cane, to pineapples, to . . .

MH: Yes. At that time my wife was sick, too, and we couldn't look after the chickens. When she got sick in 1947 I went to Honolulu for six months because she was in Queen's Hospital. This was a little bit of a [shock] to my boy.

I spent a lot of money then--almost everything we had. Six months I was in Honolulu. Even after she got well she went for check-ups every month. Then, because she was quite a bit better we came back to Maui. But then again in 1957, it happened and we spent six months in Honolulu. There was this place called the Pensacola Hotel, way up. Back then a man named Harada ran it. There was a duplex. He ran it as a boardinghouse for students and charged very reasonably. I stayed there since I couldn't always be imposing on friends. (Pause) So I was in Honolulu twice for six months. Back then if you got on welfare, they said they'd send you to Kaneohe, eh? [State Hospital]

So I paid everything myself. At that time, the doctor--the first doctor--was named Shanahan. The next--the second time it was Dr. Kittner. He was a specialist--a very skilled doctor of that time. But the second time--and not just anybody could do this; not just any inexperienced doctor could do this--they put a wire here [points to head] and did something--made a connection. Then they would go b-z-z-t and run electricity through. Oh, it was terrible. They

would charge sixty dollars or seventy dollars just to do it once.

YS: In conclusion, though, Mr. Hayashida---well, you've certainly done all sorts of work--from sugarcane to pineapple grower to fish seller to chicken farmer. But looking back, which would you say you enjoyed the most? What work was the most fun for you?

MH: (Laughs) I wouldn't really call any of it enjoyable. (Laughter) There was. . . .(laughs) Always only trouble. When I grew pine-apples---I had money, before.

YS: So pineapples were the most profitable?

MH: I lost.

YS: You lost?

MH: A big loss--the biggest loss. A big loss and debts.

YS: But just now you said you had the most money when you raised pine-apples, didn't you?

MH: Before that I was working for the plantation. We didn't have much strength. The plantation was strong. So even though it was cheap---my friends had mostly died. I got sick too, with fever. I thought I would die. So since the pay was cheap I thought I had better get some easy work. So I tried working for a Japanese store. But then that person went bankrupt and [I] had a chance at liquor wholesaling at that time. Then my pay was good. I got twice as much as other people.

YS: So the most profitable . . . .

MH: Was that time then, yes.

YS: Liquor? In the liquor business?

MH: Yes. The pay at that time wasn't that much, but everywhere else was even less.

YS: Which job was the most unpleasant? The least enjoyable?

MH: (Laughs) Well, at that time, that was about it.

YS: What was? What work was the most unpleasant?

MH: Then it was taking orders for the liquor shop--things like that. Even if you say enjoy, it was almost entirely hardships. Then Prohibition came . . . . Prohibition in 1917 or 1918. Then I drove a taxi. The taxi made good money. There weren't many of them back then. Since I drove the taxi. I made money.

YS: Having done all these different things, can you look back over it all and reminisce or reflect on . . .

MH: Well, I tried everything.

YS: As a sort of wrap-up of our three interviews, can you come to any conclusions as you look back at all?

MH: Conclusions? (Chuckles) In that sense, I guess I'm sort of inconclusive. I did some of this and some of that is why. The taxi made money, but it wasn't for me . . .

YS: Why was that?

MH: Well, it wasn't very good work. But because there weren't many other taxis, it was very profitable. But even though it made money, I didn't think I needed to do such dirty work and I quit.

YS: Looking back at now--in retrospect--is there anything you wish you had done--if you were to do it again?

MH: Well, none of the things I did were conclusive. I should have stuck with business and worked at it. Looking back on life, I think it was a mistake that I jumped around from one thing to another. I was too impatient--not just me, but almost all Japanese--up to 80 per cent--wanted to make money fast and go back to Japan. In other words, they didn't think things out enough. It's true that we Japanese acted too hastily. The ones who stuck with it are the ones who did the best. . . . Yes. That's right. Like pineapples--before I got into pineapples I was rich. But I didn't research pineapples enough. The situation with pineapples then was---the price wasn't steady. And it was our mistake that we didn't research the matter much. But it wasn't just me. Most of the Japanese in the business--there were 500 or so--maybe only 10 per cent of them made money. Some went back to the plantation, or got into other business. In the end there were really very few Japanese pineapple growers who made any money.

YS: You said a moment ago that you really should have picked one trade and given it your undivided attention. So in your case, which trade do you think you should have continued?

MH: Business. I mean, like running a store, for a lengthy period of time, with a patient outlook. It would have been good to do it like that.

YS: So you think business was . . .

MH: Business was best.

YS: You liked business.

MH: Yes. Yes, that's right. Business, after all--but if you're impatient in business (chuckles)--most Japanese fail by being too impatient. And Japanese always thought of Japan and wanted to go back at least once. And they sent money back to Japan, right? Because of that, they couldn't get established here. They didn't want to settle down.

It wasn't just those people, though, the Japanese government was at fault too. Everyone wanted to take their money and go back to Japan, everyone was so impatient. It's only since the war--Second World War, after Second World War that the feeling to stay in Hawaii came. Before, "We go home Japan, we go home Japan, you send Japan (laughs) money." I even sent quite a bit. Because of that the Japanese never had much wealth. After the war we settled down.

YS: Well, this about wraps up the third of our talks. I want to thank you for your valuable and interesting stories . . .

MH: (Laughs) Just dull stories, I'm afraid.

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and  
STOREKEEPERS of  
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

**Volume I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Ethnic Studies Program  
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

**June 1980**